The Blue Bird

Maurice Maeterlinck

THE BLUE BIRD

A Fairy Play in Five Acts

BY

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Translated by

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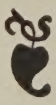

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CHARACTERS

Tyltyl	The Wolf
Mytyl	The Pig
Light	The Ox
The Fairy Bérylune	The Cow
Neighbour Berlingot	The Bull
Daddy Tyl	The Sheep
Mummy Tyl	The Cock
Gaffer Tyl (Dead)	The Rabbit
Granny Tyl (Dead)	The Horse
Tyltyl's Brothers and Sisters (Dead)	The Ass
	The Oak
Time	The Elm
Night	The Beech
Neighbour Berlingot's Little Daughter	The Lime-tree
Tylo, the Dog	The Fir-tree
Tylette, the Cat	The Cypress
Bread	The Birch
Sugar	The Chestnut-tree
Fire	The Ivy
Water	The Poplar
Milk	The Willow

Stars, Sicknesses, Shades, etc.

COSTUMES

TYLTYL wears the dress of Hop o' my Thumb in Perrault's Tales. Scarlet knickerbockers, pale-blue jacket, white stockings, tan shoes.

MYTYL is dressed like Gretel or Little Red Riding-hood.

LIGHT.—The "moon-coloured" dress in Perrault's *Peau d'âne;* that is to say, pale gold shot with silver, shimmering gauzes, forming a sort of rays, etc. Neo-Grecian or Anglo-Grecian (*à la* Walter Crane) or even more or less Empire style: a high waist, bare arms, etc. Head-dress: a sort of diadem or even a light crown.

THE FAIRY BÉRYLUNE and NEIGHBOUR BERLINGOT.—The traditional dress of the poor women in fairy-tales. If desired, the transformation of the Fairy into a princess in Act I may be omitted.

DADDY TYL, MUMMY TYL, GAFFER TYL and GRANNY TYL.—The traditional costume of the German wood-cutters and peasants in Grimm's Tales.

TYLTYL'S BROTHERS AND SISTERS.—Different forms of the Hop-o'-my-Thumb costume.

TIME.—Traditional dress of Time: a wide black or dark-blue cloak, a streaming white beard, scythe and hour-glass.

NIGHT.—Ample black garments, covered with mysterious stars and "shot" with reddish-brown reflections. Veils, dark poppies, etc.

THE NEIGHBOUR'S LITTLE GIRL.—Bright fair hair; a long white frock.

THE DOG.—Red dress-coat, white breeches, top-boots, a shiny hat. The costume suggests that of John Bull.

THE CAT.—The costume of Puss in Boots: powdered wig, three-cornered hat, violet or sky-blue coat, dress-sword, etc.

N.B.—The heads of the DOG and the CAT should be only discreetly animalised.

BREAD.—A rich pasha's dress. An ample crimson silk or velvet gown. A huge turban. A scimitar. An enormous stomach, red and puffed-out cheeks.

SUGAR.—A silk gown, cut like that of a eunuch in a seraglio, half blue and half white, to suggest the paper wrapper of a sugar-loaf. Eunuch's head-dress.

FIRE.—Red tights, a vermilion cloak with changing reflections, lined with gold. An aigrette of iridescent flames.

WATER.—A pale-blue or bluish-green dress, with transparent reflections and effects of rippling or trickling gauze. Neo-Grecian or Anglo-Grecian style, but fuller and more voluminous than that of LIGHT. Head-dress of aquatic flowers and seaweed.

THE ANIMALS.—Popular or peasant costumes.

THE TREES.—Dresses of different shades of green or the colour of the trunks of trees. Distinctive attributes in the shape of leaves or branches by which they can be recognised.

SCENES

ACT I.—The Wood-cutter's Cottage.

ACT II., Scene 1—At the Fairy's.
Scene 2—The Land of Memory.

ACT III., Scene 1—The Palace of Night.
Scene 2—The Forest.

ACT IV., Scene 1—Before the Curtain.
Scene 2—The Graveyard.
Scene 3—The Kingdom of the Future.

ACT V., Scene 1—The Leave-taking.
Scene 2—The Awakening.

The Blue Bird

ACT I

The Wood-cutter's Cottage

The stage represents the interior of a wood-cutter's cottage, simple and rustic in appearance, but in no way poverty-stricken. A recessed fireplace containing the dying embers of a wood-fire. Kitchen utensils, a cupboard, a bread-pan, a grandfather's clock, a spinning-wheel, a water-tap, etc. On a table, a lighted lamp. At the foot of the cupboard, on either side, a DOG *and a* CAT *lie sleeping, rolled up, each with his nose in his tail. Between them stands a large blue-and-white sugar-loaf. On the wall hangs a round cage containing a turtle-dove. At the back, two windows, with closed inside shutters. Under one of the windows, a stool. On the left is the front door, with a*

big latch to it. On the right, another door. A ladder leads up to a loft. On the right also are two little children's cots, at the head of which are two chairs, with clothes carefully folded on them. When the curtain rises, TYLTYL *and* MYTYL *are sound asleep in their cots.* MUMMY TYL *tucks them in, leans over them, watches them for a moment as they sleep and beckons to* DADDY TYL, *who thrusts his head through the half-open door.* MUMMY TYL *lays a finger on her lips, to impose silence upon him, and then goes out to the right, on tip-toe, after first putting out the lamp. The scene remains in darkness for a moment. Then a light, gradually increasing in intensity, filters in through the shutters. The lamp on the table lights again of itself, but its light is of a different colour than when* MUMMY TYL *extinguished it. The two* CHILDREN *appear to wake and sit up in bed.*

TYLTYL

Mytyl?

MYTYL

Tyltyl?

TYLTYL

Are you asleep?

MYTYL

Are you? . . .

TYLTYL

No; how can I be asleep when I'm talking to you?

MYTYL

Say, is this Christmas Day? . . .

TYLTYL

Not yet; not till to-morrow. But Father Christmas won't bring us anything this year. . . .

MYTYL

Why not?

TYLTYL

I heard mummy say that she couldn't go to town to tell him. . . . But he will come next year. . . .

MYTYL

Is next year far off? . . .

TYLTYL

A good long while. . . . But he will come to the rich children to-night. . . .

MYTYL

Really? . . .

TYLTYL

Hullo! . . . Mummy's forgotten to put out the lamp! . . . I've an idea! . . .

MYTYL

What? . . .

TYLTYL

Let's get up. . . .

MYTYL

But we mustn't. . . .

TYLTYL

Why, there's no one about. . . . Do you see the shutters? . . .

MYTYL

Oh, how bright they are! . . .

TYLTYL

It's the lights of the party.

MYTYL

What party? . . .

TYLTYL

The rich children opposite. It's the Christmas-tree. Let's open the shutters. . . .

MYTYL

Can we? . . . .

TYLTYL

Of course; there's no one to stop us. . . . Do you hear the music? . . . Let us get up. . . . .

(*The two* CHILDREN *get up, run to one of the windows, climb on to the stool and throw back the shutters. A bright light fills the room. The* CHILDREN *look out greedily.*)

TYLTYL

We can see everything! . . . .

MYTYL (*who can hardly find room on the stool*)

I can't. . . . . .

TYLTYL

It's snowing! . . . There's two carriages, with six horses each! . . .

MYTYL

There are twelve little boys getting out! . . .

TYLTYL

How silly you are! . . . They're little girls. . . .

MYTYL

They've got knickerbockers. . . .

TYLTYL

What do you know? . . . Don't push so! . . .

MYTYL

I never touched you.

TYLTYL (*who is taking up the whole stool*)

You're taking up all the room. . . .

MYTYL

Why, I have no room at all! . . .

TYLTYL

Do be quiet! I see the tree! . . .

MYTYL

What tree? . . .

TYLTYL

Why, the Christmas-tree! . . . You're looking at the wall! . . .

MYTYL

I'm looking at the wall because I've got no room. . . .

TYLTYL (*giving her a miserly little place on the stool*)

There! . . . Will that do? . . . Now you're better off than I! . . . I say, what lots and lots of lights! . . .

MYTYL

What are those people doing who are mak- such a noise? . . .

TYLTYL

They're the musicians.

MYTYL

Are they angry? . . .

TYLTYL

No; but it's hard work.

MYTYL

Another carriage with white horses! . . .

TYLTYL

Be quiet! . . . And look! . . .

MYTYL

What are those gold things there, hanging from the branches?

TYLTYL

Why, toys, to be sure! . . . Swords, guns, soldiers, cannons. . . .

MYTYL

And dolls; say, are there any dolls? . . .

TYLTYL

Dolls? . . . That's too silly; there's no fun in dolls. . . .

MYTYL

And what's that all round the table? . . .

TYLTYL

Cakes and fruit and tarts. . . .

MYTYL

I had some once when I was little. . . .

TYLTYL

So did I; it's nicer than bread, but they don't give you enough. . . .

MYTYL

They've got plenty over there. . . . The whole table's full. . . . Are they going to eat them? . . .

TYLTYL

Of course; what else would they do with them? . . . .

MYTYL

Why don't they eat them at once? . . . .

TYLTYL

Because they're not hungry. . . .

MYTYL (*stupefied with astonishment*)

Not hungry? . . . Why not? . . . .

TYLTYL

Well, they eat whenever they want to. . . .

MYTYL (*incredulously*)

Every day? . . . . .

TYLTYL

They say so. . . .

MYTYL

Will they eat them all? . . . Will they give any away? . . .

TYLTYL

To whom? . . .

MYTYL

To us. . . . .

TYLTYL

They don't know us. . . . .

MYTYL

Suppose we asked them. . . .

TYLTYL

We mustn't.

MYTYL

Why not? . . .

TYLTYL

Because it's not right.

MYTYL (*clapping her hands*)

Oh, how pretty they are! . . .

TYLTYL (*rapturously*)

And how they're laughing and laughing! . . .

MYTYL

And the little ones dancing! . . .

TYLTYL

Yes, yes; let's dance too! . . . (*They stamp their feet for joy on the stool.*)

MYTYL

Oh, what fun! . . .

TYLTYL

They're getting the cakes! . . . They can touch them! . . . They're eating, they're eating, they're eating! . . .

MYTYL

The tiny ones, too! . . . They've got two, three, four apiece! . . .

TYLTYL (*drunk with delight*)

Oh, how lovely! . . . Oh, how lovely, how lovely! . . .

MYTYL (*counting imaginary cakes*)

I've got twelve! . . .

TYLTYL

And I four times twelve! . . . But I'll give you some. . . .

(*A knock at the door of the cottage*).

TYLTYL (*suddenly quieted and frightened*)

What's that? . . .

MYTYL (*scared*)

It's Daddy! . . .

(*As they hesitate before opening the door, the big latch is seen to rise of itself, with a grating noise; the door half opens to admit a little old woman dressed in green with a red hood on her*

head. She is humpbacked and lame and near-sighted; her nose and chin meet; and she walks bent on a stick. She is obviously a fairy.)

THE FAIRY

Have you the grass here that sings or the bird that is blue? . . .

TYLTYL

We have some grass, but it can't sing. . . .

MYTYL

Tyltyl has a bird.

TYLTYL

But I can't give it away. . . .

THE FAIRY

Why not? . . .

TYLTYL

Because it's mine.

THE FAIRY

That's a reason, no doubt. Where is the bird? . . .

TYLTYL (*pointing to the cage*)

In the cage. . . .

THE FAIRY (*putting on her glasses to examine the bird*)

I don't want it; it's not blue enough. You will have to go and find me the one I want.

TYLTYL

But I don't know where it is. . . .

THE FAIRY

No more do I. That's why you must look for it. I can do without the grass that sings, at a pinch; but I must absolutely have the blue bird. It's for my little girl, who is very ill.

TYLTYL

What's the matter with her? . . .

THE FAIRY

We don't quite know; she wants to be happy. . . .

TYLTYL

Really? . . .

THE FAIRY

Do you know who I am? . . .

TYLTYL

You're rather like our neighbour, Madame Berlingot. . . .

THE FAIRY (*growing suddenly angry*)

Not a bit! . . . There's not the least like-

ness! . . . This is intolerable! . . . I am the Fairy Bérylune. . . .

TYLTYL

Oh! Very well. . . .

THE FAIRY

You will have to start at once.

TYLTYL

Are you coming with us?

THE FAIRY

I can't, because I put on the soup this morning and it always boils over if I leave it for more than hour. . . . (*Pointing successively to the ceiling, the chimney and the window*) Will you go out this way, or that way, or that way? . . .

TYLTYL (*pointing timidly to the door*)

I would rather go out that way. . . .

THE FAIRY (*growing suddenly angry again*)

That's quite impossible; and it's a shocking habit! . . . (*Pointing to the window*) We'll go out this way. . . . Well? . . . What are you waiting for? . . . Get dressed at once. . . . (*The* CHIL-

DREN *do as they are told and dress quickly.*) I'll help Mytyl. . . .

TYLTYL

We have no shoes. . . .

THE FAIRY

That doesn't matter. I will give you a little magic hat. Where are your father and mother? . . .

TYLTYL (*pointing to the door on the right*)

They're asleep in there. . . .

THE FAIRY

And your grandpapa and grandmamma? . . .

TYLTYL

They're dead. . . .

THE FAIRY

And your little brothers and sisters. . . . Have you any? . . .

TYLTYL

Oh, yes; three little brothers. . . .

MYTYL

And four little sisters. . . .

THE FAIRY

Where are they? . . .

TYLTYL

They are dead, too. . . .

THE FAIRY

Would you like to see them again? . . .

TYLTYL

Oh, yes! . . . At once! . . . Show them to us! . . .

THE FAIRY

I haven't got them in my pocket. . . . But this is very lucky; you will see them when you go through the Land of Memory. . . . It's on the way to the Blue Bird, just on the left, past the third turning. . . . What were you doing when I knocked? . . .

TYLTYL

We were playing at eating cakes? . . .

THE FAIRY

Have you any cakes? . . . Where are they? . . .

TYLTYL

In the house of the rich children. . . . Come and look, it's so lovely. (*He drags the* FAIRY *to the window.*)

THE FAIRY (*at the window*)

But it's the others who are eating them! . . .

TYLTYL

Yes; but we can see them eat. . . .

THE FAIRY

Aren't you cross with them? . . .

TYLTYL

What for? . . .

THE FAIRY

For eating all the cakes. . . . I think it's very wrong of them not to give you some. . . .

TYLTYL

Not at all; they're rich. . . . I say, isn't it beautiful over there? . . . .

THE FAIRY

It's no more beautiful there than here.

TYLTYL

Ugh! . . . It's darker here and smaller and there are no cakes. . . .

THE FAIRY

It's exactly the same, only you can't see. . . .

TYLTYL

Yes, I can; and I have very good eyes. I can see the time on the church clock and daddy can't . . . .

THE FAIRY (*suddenly angry*)

I tell you that you can't see! . . . How do you see me? . . . What do I look like? . . . (*An awkward silence from* TYLTYL.) Well, answer me, will you? I want to know if you can see! . . . Am I pretty or ugly? . . . (*The silence grows more and more uncomfortable.*) Won't you answer? . . . Am I young or old? . . . Are my cheeks pink or yellow? . . . Perhaps you'll say I have a hump? . . .

TYLTYL (*in a conciliatory tone*)

No, no; it's not a big one. . . .

THE FAIRY

Oh, yes, to look at you, any one would think it enormous. . . . Have I a hook nose and have I lost one of my eyes? . . .

TYLTYL

Oh, no, I don't say that. . . . Who put it out? . . .

THE FAIRY (*growing more and more irritated*).

But it's not out! . . . You wretched, impudent boy! . . . It's much finer than

the other; it's bigger and brighter and blue as the sky. . . . And my hair, do you see that? . . . It's fair as the corn in the fields, it's like virgin gold! . . . And I've such heaps and heaps of it that it weighs my head down. . . . It escapes on every side. . . . Do you see it on my hands? (*She holds out two lean wisps of grey hair.*)

TYLTYL

Yes, I see a little. . . .

THE FAIRY (*indignantly*)

A little! . . . Sheaves! Armfuls! Clusters! Waves of gold! . . . I know there are people who say that they don't see any; but you're not one of those wicked, blind people, I should hope? . . .

TYLTYL

Oh, no; I can see all that isn't hidden. . . .

THE FAIRY

But you ought to see the rest with as little doubt! . . . Human beings are very odd! . . . Since the death of the fairies, they see nothing at all and they

never suspect it. . . . Luckily, I always carry with me all that is wanted to give new light to dimmed eyes. . . . What am I taking out of my bag? . . .

TYLTYL

Oh, what a dear little green hat! . . . What's that shining in the cockade? . . .

THE FAIRY

That's the big diamond that makes people see. . . .

TYLTYL

Really? . . .

THE FAIRY

Yes; when you've got the hat on your head, you turn the diamond a little; from right to left, for instance, like this; do you see? . . . Then it presses a bump which nobody knows of and which opens your eyes. . . .

TYLTYL

Doesn't it hurt? . . .

THE FAIRY

On the contrary, it's enchanted. . . . You

at once see even the inside of things: the soul of bread, of wine, of pepper, for instance. . . .

MYTYL

Can you see the soul of sugar, too? . . .

THE FAIRY (*suddenly cross*)

Of course you can! . . . I hate unnecessary questions. . . . The soul of sugar is no more interesting than the soul of pepper. . . . There, I give you all I have to help you in your search for the Blue Bird. I know that the flying carpet or the ring which makes its wearer invisible would be more useful to you. . . . But I have lost the key of the cupboard in which I locked them. . . . Oh, I was almost forgetting! . . . (*Pointing to the diamond*) When you hold it like this, do you see? . . . One little turn more and you behold the past. . . . Another little turn and you behold the future. . . . It's curious and practical and it's quite noiseless. . . .

TYLTYL

Daddy will take it from me. . . .

THE FAIRY

He won't see it; no one can see it as long as it's on your head. . . . Will you try it? . . . (*She puts the little green hat on* TYLTYL'S *head.*) Now, turn the diamond. . . . One turn and then. . . .

(TYLTYL *has no sooner turned the diamond than a sudden and wonderful change comes over everything. The old* FAIRY *alters then and there into a princess of marvellous beauty; the flints of which the cottage walls are built light up, turn blue as sapphires, become transparent and gleam and sparkle like the most precious stones. The humble furniture takes life and becomes resplendent; the deal table assumes as grave and noble an air as*

a table made of marble; the face of the clock winks its eye and smiles genially, while the door that contains the pendulum opens and releases the Hours, which, holding one another by the hand and laughing merrily, begin to dance to the sound of delicious music.

TYLTYL (*displaying a legitimate bewilderment and pointing to the Hours*)

Who are all those pretty ladies? . . .

THE FAIRY

Don't be afraid; they are the hours of your life and they are glad to be free and visible for a moment. . . .

TYLTYL

And why are the walls so bright? . . . Are they made of sugar or of precious stones? . . .

THE FAIRY

All stones are alike, all stones are precious; but man sees only a few of them. . . .

(*While they are speaking, the scene of enchantment continues and is completed. The souls of the Quartern-loaves, in the form of little men in crust-coloured tights, flurried and all powdered with flour, scramble out of the bread-pan and frisk round the table, where they are caught up by* FIRE, *who, springing from the hearth in yellow and vermilion tights, writhes with laughter as he chases the loaves.*)

TYLTYL

Who are those ugly little men? . . .

THE FAIRY

Oh, they're nothing; they are merely the souls of the Quartern-loaves, who are taking advantage of the reign of truth to leave the pan in which they were too tightly packed. . . .

TYLTYL

And the big red fellow, with the nasty smell? . . .

THE FAIRY

Hush! . . . Don't speak too loud; that's Fire. . . . He's dangerous.

(*This dialogue does not interrupt the enchantment. The* DOG *and the* CAT, *lying rolled up at the foot of the cupboard, utter a loud and simultaneous cry and disappear down a trap; and in their places rise two persons, one of whom has the face of a bull-dog, the other that of a tom-cat. Forthwith, the little man with the bull-dog face, whom we will henceforward call the* DOG, *rushes upon* TYLTYL, *kisses him violently and overwhelms him with noisy and impetuous caresses; while the little man with the face*

of a tom-cat, whom we will simply call the CAT, *combs his hair, washes his hands and strokes his whiskers before going up to* MYTYL.)

THE DOG (*yelling, jumping about, knocking up against everything, unbearable*).

My little god! . . . Good-morning, good-morning, my dear little god! . . . At last, at last we can talk! . . . I had so much to tell you! . . . Bark and wag my tail as I might, you never understood! . . . But now! . . . Good-morning, good-morning! . . . I love you! . . . Shall I do some of my tricks? . . . Shall I beg? . . . Would you like to see me walk on my front paws or dance on my hind-legs? . . .

TYLTYL (*to the* FAIRY)

Who is this gentleman with the dog's head? . . .

THE FAIRY

Don't you see? It's the soul of TYLÔ, whom you have set free. . . .

THE CAT (*going up to* MYTYL *and putting out his hand to her, with much ceremony and circumspection*)

Good-morning, Miss. . . . How well you look this morning! . . .

MYTYL

Good-morning, sir. . . . (*To the* FAIRY) Who is it? . . .

THE FAIRY

Why, don't you see? Its the soul of Tylette offering you his hand. . . . Kiss him. . . .

THE DOG (*hustling the* CAT)

Me, too! . . . I've kissed the little god! . . . I've kissed the little girl! . . . I've kissed everybody! . . . Oh, grand! . . . What fun we shall have! . . . I'm going to frighten Tylette! Bow, wow, wow! . . .

THE CAT

Sir, I don't know you. . . .

THE FAIRY (*threatening the* DOG *with her stick*)

Keep still, will you, or else you'll go back into silence until the end of time. . . .

(*Meanwhile, the enchantment has pursued its course: the spinning-wheel has begun to turn madly in its corner and to spin brilliant rays of light; the tap, in another corner, begins to sing in a very high voice and, turning into a luminous fountain, floods the sink with sheets of pearls and emeralds, through which darts the soul of* WATER, *like a young girl, streaming, dishevelled and tearful, who immediately begins to fight with* FIRE.)

TYLTYL

And who is that wet lady? . . .

THE FAIRY

Don't be afraid, it's Water just come from the tap. . . .

(*The milk-jug upsets, falls from the table and smashes on*

the floor; and from the spilt milk there rises a tall, white, bashful figure who seems to be afraid of everything.)

TYLTYL

And the frightened lady in her night-gown? . . .

THE FAIRY

That's Milk; she has broken her jug. . . .

(*The sugar-loaf, at the foot of the cupboard, grows taller and wider and splits its paper wrapper, whence issues a mawkish and hypocritical being, dressed in a long coat half blue and half white, who goes up to* MYTYL *with a sanctimonious smile.*)

MYTYL (*greatly alarmed*)

What does he want? . . .

THE FAIRY

Why, he is the soul of Sugar! . . .

MYTYL (*reassured*)

Has he any barley-sugar? . . .

THE FAIRY

His pockets are full of it and each of his fingers is a sugar-stick. . . .

(*The lamp falls from the table and, at the same moment, its flame springs up again and turns into a luminous maid of incomparable beauty. She is dressed in long transparent and dazzling veils and stands motionless in a sort of ecstasy.*)

TYLTYL

It's the Queen! . . .

MYTYL

It's the Blessed Virgin! . . .

THE FAIRY

No, my children; it's Light. . . .

(*Meanwhile, the saucepans on the shelves spin round like tops; the linen-press throws open its folding-doors and unrolls a magnifi-*

cent display of moon-coloured and sun-coloured stuffs, with which mingles a no less splendid array of rags and tatters that come down the ladder from the loft. But, suddenly, three loud knocks are heard on the door at the right.)

TYLTYL (*alarmed*)

That's daddy! . . . He's heard us! . . .

THE FAIRY

Turn the diamond! . . . From left to right! . . .

(TYLTYL *turns the diamond quickly.*)

Not so quick! . . . Heavens! It's too late! . . . You turned it too briskly; they will not have time to resume their places and we shall have a lot of annoyance. . . .

(*The* FAIRY *becomes an old woman again, the walls of the cottage lose their splendour. The Hours go back*

into the clock, the spinning-wheel stops, etc. But, in the general hurry and confusion, while FIRE *runs madly round the room, looking for the chimney, one of the loaves of bread, who has been unable to squeeze into the pan, bursts into sobs and utters roars of fright.*)

THE FAIRY

What's the matter? . . .

BREAD (*in tears*)

There's no room in the pan! . . .

THE FAIRY (*stooping over the pan*)

Yes, there is; yes, there is. . . . (*Pushing the other loaves, which have resumed their original places.*) Come, quick, make room there. . . .

(*The knocking at the door is renewed.*)

BREAD (*utterly scared, vainly struggling to enter the pan*)

I can't get in! . . . He'll eat me first! . . .

THE DOG (*frisking round* TYLTYL)

My little god! . . . I am still here! . . . I can still talk! . . . I can still kiss you! . . . Once more! Once more! Once more! . . .

THE FAIRY

What, you too? . . . Are you there still? . . .

THE DOG

What luck! . . . I was too late to return to silence; the trap closed too quickly. . . .

THE CAT

So did mine. . . . What is going to happen? . . . Is there any danger? . . .

THE FAIRY

Well, I'm bound to tell you the truth: all those who accompany the two children will die at the end of the journey. . . .

THE CAT (*to the* DOG)

Come, let us get back into the trap. . . .

THE DOG

No, no! . . . I won't! . . . I want to go with the little god! . . . I want to talk to him all the time! . . .

THE CAT

Idiot! . . .

(*More knocking at the door*)

BREAD (*shedding bitter tears*)

I don't want to die at the end of the journey! . . . I want to get back at once into my pan! . . .

FIRE (*who has done nothing but run madly round the room, hissing with anguish*)

I can't find my chimney! . . .

WATER (*vainly trying to get into the tap*)

I can't get into the tap! . . .

SUGAR (*hovering round his paper wrapper*)

I've burst my packing-paper! . . .

MILK (*lymphatically and bashfully*)

Somebody's broken my little jug! . . .

THE FAIRY

Goodness me, what fools they are! . . . Fools and cowards too! . . . So you would rather go on living in your ugly boxes, in your traps and taps, than accompany the children in search of the bird? . . .

ALL (*excepting the* DOG *and* LIGHT)

Yes, yes! Now, at once! . . . My tap!

. . . My pan! . . . My chimney! . . . My trap! . . .

THE FAIRY (*to* LIGHT, *who is dreamily gazing at the wreckage of her lamp*)

And you, Light, what do you say?

LIGHT

I will go with the children. . . .

THE DOG (*yelling with delight*)

I too! . . . I too! . . .

THE FAIRY

That's right. . . . Besides, it's too late to go back; you have no choice now, you must all start with us. . . . But you, Fire, don't come near anybody; you, Dog, don't tease the Cat; and you, Water, hold yourself up and try not to run all over the place. . . .

(*A violent knocking is again heard at the door on the right.*)

TYLTYL (*listening*)

There's daddy again! . . . He's getting up this time; I can hear him walking. . . .

THE FAIRY

Let us go out by the window. . . . You shall all come to my house, where I will dress the Animals and the Things properly. . . . (*To* BREAD) You, Bread, take the cage in which to put the Blue Bird. . . . It will be in your charge. . . . Quick, quick, let us waste no time. . . .

(*The window suddenly lengthens downwards, like a door. They all go out; after which the window resumes its primitive shape and closes quite innocently. The room has become dark again and the two cots are steeped in shadow. The door on the right opens ajar and in the aperture appear the heads of* DADDY *and* MUMMY TYL.)

DADDY TYL

It was nothing. . . . It's the cricket chirping. . . .

MUMMY TYL

Can you see them? . . .

DADDY TYL

I can. . . . They are sleeping quite quietly. . . .

MUMMY TYL

I can hear their breathing. . . .

(*The door closes again*)

CURTAIN

ACT II

SCENE 1.—*At the* FAIRY'S

A magnificent entrance-hall in the palace of the FAIRY BÉRYLUNE. *Columns of gleaming marble with gold and silver capitals, staircases, porticoes, balustrades, etc.*

Enter from the back, on the right, sumptuously clad, the CAT, SUGAR *and* FIRE. *They come from a room which emits rays of light; it is the* FAIRY'S *wardrobe. The* CAT *has donned the classic costume of Puss-in-boots;* SUGAR, *a silk dress, half white and half pale-blue; and* FIRE *wears a number of many-coloured aigrettes and a long vermilion mantle lined with gold. They cross the whole length of the hall to the front of the stage, where the* CAT *draws them up under a portico on the right.*

THE CAT

This way. I know every inch of this palace. It was left to the Fairy Bérylune by Bluebeard . . . Let us make the most of our last minute of liberty, while the children and Light pay their visit to the Fairy's little daughter. . . . I have brought you here in order to discuss the position in which we are placed. . . . Are we all here? . . .

SUGAR

I see the Dog coming out of the Fairy's wardrobe. . . .

FIRE

What on earth has he got on? . . .

THE CAT

He has put on the livery of one of the footmen of Cinderella's coach. . . . It was just the thing for him. . . . He has the soul of a flunkey. . . . But let us hide behind the balustrade. . . . It's strange how I mistrust him. . . . He had better not hear what I have to say to you. . . .

SUGAR

It is too late. . . . He has discovered us. . . . Look, here is Water also coming out of the wardrobe. . . . Goodness me, how fine she is! . . .

(*The* DOG *and* WATER *join the first group.*)

THE DOG (*frisking about*)

There! There! . . . Aren't we fine! . . . Just look at these laces and this embroidery! . . . It's real gold and no mistake! . . .

THE CAT (*to* WATER)

Is that Catskin's "colour-of-time" dress? . . . I seem to recognise it. . . .

WATER

Yes, it's the one that suited me best. . . .

FIRE (*between his teeth*)

She's not brought her umbrella. . . .

WATER

What's that? . . .

FIRE

Nothing, nothing. . . .

WATER

I thought you might be speaking of a great red nose I saw the other day. . . .

THE CAT

Come, don't let us quarrel; we have more important things to do. . . . We are only waiting for Bread; where is he? . . .

THE DOG

He was making an endless fuss about choosing his dress. . . .

FIRE

Worth while, isn't it, for a fellow who looks a fool and carries an enormous stomach? . . .

THE DOG

At last, he decided in favour of a Turkish robe, adorned with gems, a scimitar and a turban. . . .

THE CAT

There he is! . . . He has put on Bluebeard's finest dress . . .

Enter BREAD, *in the costume described above. The silk robe is crossed tightly over his huge stomach. In one hand*

he holds the hilt of a scimitar passed through his sash and in the other the cage intended for the Blue Bird.

BREAD (*waddling conceitedly*)

Well? . . . What do you think of this?

THE DOG (*frisking round the* LOAF)

How nice he looks! What a fool he looks! How nice he looks! How nice he looks! . . .

THE CAT (*to the* LOAF)

Are the children dressed? . . .

BREAD

Yes, Master Tyltyl has put on Hop-o'-my-Thumb's blue jacket and red breeches; and Miss Mytyl has Gretel's frock and Cinderella's slippers. . . . But the great thing was the dressing of Light! . . .

THE CAT

Why? . . .

BREAD

The Fairy thought her so lovely that she did not want to dress her at all! . . . Thereupon I protested in the name of our dignity as essential and eminently

respectable elements; and I ended by declaring that, under those conditions, I should refuse to be seen with her. . . .

FIRE

They ought to have bought her a lamp-shade! . . .

THE CAT

And what answer did the Fairy make? . . .

THE LOAF

She hit me with her stick on my head and stomach. . . .

THE CAT

And then? . . .

BREAD

I allowed myself to be convinced; but, at the last moment, Light decided on the moonbeam dress at the bottom of the chest with Catskin's treasures. . . .

THE CAT

Come, stop chattering, time presses. . . . Our future is at stake. . . . You have heard—the Fairy has just said so—that the end of this journey will, at the same time, mark the end of our lives.

. . . It is our business, therefore, to prolong it as much as possible and by every possible means. . . . But there is another thing: we must think of the fate of our race and the destiny of our children. . . .

BREAD

Hear, hear! . . . The Cat is right! . . .

THE CAT

Listen to me! . . . All of us here present, Animals, Things and Elements, possess a soul which man does not yet know. That is why we retain a remnant of independence; but, if he finds the Blue Bird, he will know all, he will see all and we shall be completely at his mercy. . . . This is what I have just learned from my old friend, Night, who is also the guardian of the mysteries of Life. . . . It is to our interest, therefore, at all costs to prevent the finding of that bird, even if we have to go so far as to endanger the lives of the children themselves. . . .

THE DOG (*indignantly*)

What's the fellow saying? . . . Just say that again, will you, to see if I heard right? . . .

BREAD

Order! Order! . . . It's not your turn to speak! . . . I'm in the chair at this meeting. . . .

FIRE

Who made you chairman? . . .

WATER (*to* FIRE)

Hold your tongue! . . . What are you interfering with? . . .

FIRE

I shall interfere where I choose. . . . And I want none of your remarks. . . .

SUGAR (*conciliatorily*)

Excuse me. . . . Do not let us quarrel. . . . This is a serious moment. . . . We must, above all things, decide what measures to adopt. . . .

BREAD

I quite agree with Sugar and the Cat. . . .

THE DOG

This is ridiculous! . . . There is Man and that's all! . . . We have to obey him and do as he tells us! . . . That is the one and only fact! . . . I recognise no one but him! . . . Hurrah for Man! . . . Man for ever! . . . In life or death, all for Man! . . . Man is God! . . .

BREAD

I quite agree with the Dog.

THE CAT (*to the* DOG)

But at least give your reasons. . . .

THE DOG

There are no reasons! . . . I love Man and that's enough! . . . If you do anything against him, I will throttle you first and I will go and tell him everything. . . .

SUGAR (*intervening sweetly*)

Excuse me. . . . Let us not embitter the discussion. . . . From a certain point of view, you are both of you right. . . . There is something to be said on both sides. . . .

BREAD

I quite agree with SUGAR! . . .

THE CAT

Are we not, all of us, Water, Fire and you yourselves, Bread and the Dog, the victims of a nameless tyranny? . . . Do you remember the time when, before the coming of the despot, we wandered at liberty upon the face of the earth? . . . Fire and Water were the sole masters of the world; and see what they have come to! . . . As for us puny descendants of the great wild animals. . . . Look out! . . . Pretend to be doing nothing! . . . I see the Fairy and Light coming. . . . Light has taken sides with Man; she is our worst enemy. . . . Here they are. . . .

Enter, on the right, the FAIRY, *in the shape of an old woman, and* LIGHT, *followed by* TYLTYL *and* MYTYL.

THE FAIRY

Well? . . . What is it? . . . What are

you doing in that corner? . . . You look like conspirators. . . . It is time to start. . . . I have decided that Light shall be your leader. . . . You will obey her as you would me and I am giving her my wand. . . . The children will pay a visit to their late grandparents this evening. . . . You will remain behind; that is more discreet. . . . They will spend the evening in the bosom of their dead family. . . . Meanwhile, you will be getting ready all that is wanted for to-morrow's journey, which will be a long one. . . . Come, up, be off and every one to his post! . . .

THE CAT (*hypocritically*)

That is just what I was saying to them, madam. . . . I was encouraging them to do their duty bravely and conscientiously; unfortunately, the Dog, who kept on interrupting me. . . .

THE DOG

What's that? . . . Just wait a bit! . . .

(*He is about to leap upon the*

CAT, *but* TYLTYL, *foreseeing his intention, stops him with a threatening gesture.*)

TYLTYL

Down, Tylô! . . . Take care; and, if ever I catch you again . . .

THE DOG

My little god, you don't know, it was he who . . .

TYLTYL (*threatening him*)

Be quiet! . . .

THE FAIRY

Come, that will do. . . . Let Bread hand the cage for this evening to Tyltyl. . . . It is just possible that the Blue Bird may be hidden in the Past, at the grandparents'. . . . In any case, it is a chance which we must not neglect. . . . Well, Bread, the cage? . . .

BREAD (*solemnly*)

One moment, if you please, Mrs. Fairy. . . . (*Like an orator making a speech*) I call upon all of you to bear witness

that this silver cage, which was entrusted to my care by . . .

THE FAIRY (*interrupting him*)

Enough! . . . No speeches! . . . We will go out this way and the children that. . . .

TYLTYL (*rather anxiously*)

Are we to go all alone? . . .

MYTYL

I feel hungry! . . .

TYLTYL

I, too! . . .

THE FAIRY (*to* BREAD)

Open your Turkish robe and give them a slice of your good stomach. . . .

(BREAD *opens his robe, draws his scimitar and cuts two slices out of his stomach and hands them to the* CHILDREN.)

SUGAR (*approaching the* CHILDREN)

Allow me at the same time to offer you a few sugar-sticks. . . .

(*He breaks off the five fingers of his left hand, one by one,*

and presents them to the CHILDREN.)

MYTYL

What is he doing? . . . He is breaking all his fingers! . . .

SUGAR (*engagingly*)

Taste them, they are capital. . . . They're made of real barley-sugar. . . .

MYTYL (*tasting one of the fingers*)

Oh, how good they are! . . . Have you many of them? . . .

SUGAR (*modestly*)

Yes; as many as I want. . . .

MYTYL

Does that hurt you much, when you break them off? . . .

SUGAR

Not at all. . . . On the contrary, it's a great advantage; they grow again at once and so I always have new, clean fingers. . . .

THE FAIRY

Come, children, don't eat too much sugar. . . . Don't forget that you are to

have supper presently with your grandpapa and grandmamma. . . .

TYLTYL

Are they here? . . .

THE FAIRY

You shall see them at once. . . .

TYLTYL

How can we see them, when they are dead? . . .

THE FAIRY

How can they be dead, when they live in your memory? . . . Men do not know this secret, because they know so little; whereas you, thanks to the diamond, are about to see that the dead who are remembered live as happily as though they were not dead. . . .

TYLTYL

Is Light coming with us?

THE FAIRY

No, it is more proper that this visit should be confined to the family. . . . I will wait near here, so as not to appear indiscreet. . . . They did not invite me. . . .

TYLTYL

Which way are we to go? . . .

THE FAIRY

Over there. . . . You are on the threshold of the Land of Memory. . . . As soon as you have turned the diamond, you will see a big tree with a board on it, which will show you that you are there. . . . But don't forget that you are to be back, both of you, by a quarter to nine. . . . It is extremely important. . . . Now mind and be punctual, for all would be lost if you were late. . . . Good-bye for the present! . . . (*Calling the* CAT, *the* DOG, LIGHT, *etc.*) This way. . . . And the little ones that way. . . .

(*She goes out to the right, with* LIGHT, *the* ANIMALS, *etc., while the* CHILDREN *go out to the left.*)

CURTAIN

SCENE 2.—*The Land of Memory.*

A thick fog, from which stands out, on the right, close to the footlights, the trunk of a large oak, with a board nailed to it. A vague, milky, impenetrable light prevails. TYLTYL *and* MYTYL *are at the foot of the oak.*

TYLTYL

Here is the tree! . . .

MYTYL

There's the board! . . .

TYLTYL

I can't read it. . . . Wait, I will climb up on this root. . . . That's it. . . . It says, "Land of Memory."

MYTYL

Is this where it begins? . . .

TYLTYL

Yes, there's an arrow. . . .

MYTYL

Well, where are grandad and granny? . . .

TYLTYL

Behind the fog. . . . We shall see. . . .

MYTYL

I can see nothing at all! . . . I can't see my feet or my hands. . . . (*Whimpering*) I'm cold! . . . I don't want to travel any more. . . . I want to go home. . . .

TYLTYL

Come, don't keep on crying, just like Water. . . . You ought to be ashamed of yourself. . . . A great big little girl like you. . . . Look, the fog is lifting already. . . . We shall see what's behind it. . . .

(*The mist begins to move; it grows thinner and lighter, disperses, evaporates. Soon, in a more and more transparent light, appears, under a leafy vault, a cheerful little peasant's cottage, covered with creepers. The door and windows are open. There are bee-hives under a shed, flower-pots on the window-sills, a cage with a*

sleeping blackbird. Beside the door is a bench, on which an old peasant and his wife, TYLTYL'S *grandfather and grandmother, are seated, both sound asleep.*)

TYLTYL (*suddenly recognising them*)

It's grandad and granny! . . .

MYTYL (*clapping her hands*)

Yes! Yes! . . . So it is! So it is! . . .

TYLTYL (*still a little distrustful*)

Take care! . . . We don't know yet if they can stir. . . . Let's keep behind the tree. . . .

(GRANNY TYL *opens her eyes, raises her head, stretches herself, gives a sigh and looks at* GAFFER TYL, *who also wakes slowly from his sleep.*)

GRANNY TYL

I have a notion that our grandchildren who are still alive are coming to see us today. . . .

GAFFER TYL

They are certainly thinking of us, for I feel anyhow and I have pins and needles in my legs. . . .

GRANNY TYL

I think they must be quite near, for I see tears of joy dancing before my eyes. . . .

GAFFER TYL

No, no, they are a long way off. . . . I still feel weak. . . .

GRANNY TYL

I tell you they are here; I am quite strong. . . .

TYLTYL *and* MYTYL (*rushing up from behind the oak*)

Here we are! . . . Here we are! . . . Gaffer! Granny! . . . It's we! . . . It's we! . . .

GAFFER TYL

There! . . . You see? . . . What did I tell you? . . . I was sure they would come to-day. . . .

GRANNY TYL

Tyltyl! . . . Mytyl! . . . It's you! . . .

It's she! . . . (*Trying to run to meet them*) I can't run! . . . I've still got the rheumatics! . . .

GAFFER TYL (*hobbling along as fast as he can*)

No more can I. . . . That's because of my wooden leg, which I still wear instead of the one I broke when I fell off the big oak. . . .

(*The* GRANDPARENTS *and the* CHILDREN *exchange frantic embraces.*)

GRANNY TYL

How tall and strong you've grown, Tyltyl!

GAFFER TYL (*stroking* MYTYL'S *hair*)

And Mytyl! . . . Just look at her. . . . What pretty hair, what pretty eyes! . . .

GRANNY TYL

Come and kiss me again! . . . Come on to my lap. . . .

GAFFER TYL

And what about me? . . .

GRANNY TYL

No, no. . . . Come to me first. . . . How are Daddy and Mummy Tyl? . . .

TYLTYL

Quite well, granny. . . . They were asleep when we went out. . . .

GRANNY TYL (*gazing at them and covering them with caresses*)

Lord, how pretty they are and how nice and clean! . . . Was it mummy who washed you? . . . And there are no holes in your stockings! . . . I used to darn them once, you know. . . . Why don't you come to see us oftener? . . . It makes us so happy! . . . It is months and months now that you've forgotten us and that we have seen nobody. . . .

TYLTYL

We couldn't, granny; and to-day its only because of the Fairy. . . .

GRANNY TYL

We are always here, waiting for a visit from those who are alive. . . . They come so seldom! . . . The last time

you were here, let me see, when was it? . . . It was on All-hallows, when the church-bells were ringing. . . .

TYLTYL

All-hallows? . . . We didn't go out that day, for we both had very bad colds. . . .

GRANNY TYL

No; but you thought of us. . . .

TYLTYL

Yes. . . .

GRANNY TYL

Well, every time you think of us, we wake up and see you again. . . .

TYLTYL

What, is it enough to . . .

GRANNY TYL

But come, you know that. . . .

TYLTYL

No, I didn't know. . . .

GRANNY TYL (*to* GAFFER TYL)

It's astonishing, up there. . . . They don't know yet. . . . Do they never learn anything? . . .

GAFFER TYL

It's as in our own time. . . . The Living are so stupid when they speak of the Others. . . .

TYLTYL

Do you sleep all the time? . . .

GAFFER TYL

Yes, we get plenty of sleep, while waiting for a thought of the Living to come and wake us. . . . Ah, it is good to sleep when life is done. . . . But it is pleasant also to wake up from time to time. . . .

TYLTYL

So you are not really dead? . . .

GAFFER TYL

What do you say? . . . What is he saying? . . . Now he's using words we don't understand. . . . Is it a new word, a new invention? . . .

TYLTYL

The word "dead"? . . .

GAFFER TYL

Yes, that was the word. . . . What does it mean? . . .

TYLTYL

Why, it means that one's no longer alive. . . .

GAFFER TYL

How silly they are, up there! . . .

TYLTYL

Is it nice here? . . .

GAFFER TYL

Oh, yes; not bad, not bad; and, if one could just have a smoke. . . .

TYLTYL

Aren't you allowed to smoke? . . .

GAFFER TYL

Yes, it's allowed; but I've broken my pipe. . . .

GRANNY TYL

Yes, yes, all would be well, if only you would come and see us oftener. . . . Do you remember, Tyltyl? . . . The last time I baked you a lovely apple-tart. . . . You ate such a lot of it that you made yourself ill. . . .

TYLTYL

But I haven't eaten any apple-tart since last

year. . . . There were no apples this year. . . .

GRANNY TYL

Don't talk nonsense. . . . Here, we have them always. . . .

TYLTYL

That's different. . . .

GRANNY TYL

What? That's different? . . . Why, nothing's different when we're able to kiss each other. . . .

TYLTYL (*looking first at his* GRANDMOTHER *and then at his* GRANDFATHER)

You haven't changed, grandad, not a bit, not a bit. . . . And granny hasn't changed a bit either. . . . But you're better-looking. . . .

GAFFER TYL

Well, we feel all right. . . . We have stopped growing older. . . . But you, how tall you're growing! . . . Yes, you're shooting up finely. . . . Look, over there, on the door, is the mark of the last time. . . . That was on All-hallows. . . . Now then, stand

up straight. . . . (TYLTYL *stands up against the door.*) Four fingers taller! . . . That's immense! . . . (MYTYL *also stands up against the door.*) And Mytyl, four and a half! . . . Aha, ill weeds grow apace! . . . How they've grown, oh, how they've grown! . . .

TYLTYL (*looking around him with delight*)

Nothing is changed, everything is in its old place! . . . Only everything is prettier! . . . There is the clock with the big hand which I broke the point off. . . .

GAFFER TYL

And here is the soup-tureen you chipped a corner off. . . .

TYLTYL

And here is the hole which I made in the door, the day I found the gimlet. . . .

GAFFER TYL

Yes, you've done some damage in your time! . . . And here is the plum-tree

in which you were so fond of climbing, when I wasn't looking. . . . It still has its fine red plums. . . .

TYLTYL

But they are finer than ever! . . .

MYTYL

And here is the old blackbird! . . . Does he still sing? . . .

(*The blackbird wakes and begins to sing at the top of his voice.*)

GRANNY TYL

You see. . . . As soon as one thinks of him. . . .

TYLTYL (*observing with amazement that the blackbird is quite blue*)

But he's blue! . . . Why, that's the bird, the Blue Bird which I am to take back to the Fairy. . . . And you never told us that you had him here! . . . Oh, he's blue, blue, blue as a blue glass marble! . . . (*Entreatingly*) Grandad, granny, will you give him to me? . . .

GAFFER TYL

Yes, perhaps, perhaps. . . . What do you think, granny? . . .

GRANNY TYL

Certainly, certainly. . . . What use is he to us? . . . He does nothing but sleep. . . . We never hear him sing. . . .

TYLTYL

I will put him in my cage. . . . I say, where is my cage? . . . Oh, I know, I left it behind the big tree. . . . (*He runs to the tree, fetches the cage and puts the blackbird into it.*) So, really, you've really given him to me? . . . How pleased the Fairy will be! . . . And Light too! . . .

GAFFER TYL

Mind you, I won't answer for the bird. . . . I'm afraid that he will never get used again to the restless life up there and that he'll come back here by the first wind that blows this way. . . . However, we shall see. . . . Leave

him there, for the present, and come and look at the cow. . . .

TYLTYL (*noticing the hives*)

And how are the bees getting on?

GAFFER TYL

Oh, pretty well. . . . They are no longer alive, as you call it up there; but they work hard. . . .

TYLTYL (*going up to the hives*)

Oh, yes!. . . . I can smell the honey! . . . How heavy the hives must be! . . . All the flowers are so beautiful! . . . And my little dead sisters, are they here too? . . .

MYTYL

And where are my three little brothers who were buried? . . .

(*At these words, seven little* CHILDREN, *of different sizes, like a set of Pan's pipes, come out of the cottage, one by one.*)

GRANNY TYL

Here they are, here they are! . . . As soon as you think of them, as soon as you

speak of them, they are there, the darlings! . . .

(TYLTYL *and* MYTYL *run to meet the* CHILDREN. *They hustle and hug one another and dance and whirl about and utter screams of joy.*)

TYLTYL

Hullo, Pierrot! . . . (*They clutch each other by the hair.*) Ah, so we're going to fight again, as in the old days. . . . And Robert! . . . I say, Jean, what's become of your top? . . . Madeleine and Pierette and Pauline! . . . And here's Riquette! . . .

MYTYL

Oh, Riquette, Riquette! . . . She's still crawling on all fours! . . .

GRANNY TYL

Yes, she has stopped growing.

TYLTYL (*noticing the little* DOG *yelping around them*)

There's Kiki, whose tail I cut off with

Pauline's scissors. . . . He hasn't changed either. . . .

GAFFER TYL (*sententiously*)

No, nothing changes here. . . .

TYLTYL

And Pauline still has a pimple on her nose. . . .

GRANNY TYL

Yes, it won't go away; there's nothing to be done for it. . . .

TYLTYL

Oh, how well they look, how fat and glossy they are! . . . What jolly cheeks they have! . . . They look well fed. . . .

GRANNY TYL

They have been much better since they ceased living. . . . There's nothing more to fear, nobody is ever ill, one has no anxiety. . . .

(*The clock inside the cottage strikes eight.*)

GRANNY TYL (*amazed*)

What's that? . . .

GAFFER TYL

I don't know, I'm sure. . . . It must be the clock. . . .

GRANNY TYL

It can't be. . . . It never strikes. . . .

GAFFER TYL

Because we no longer think of the time. . . . Was any one thinking of the time? . . .

TYLTYL

Yes, I was. . . . What is the time? . . .

GAFFER TYL

I'm sure I can't tell. . . . I've forgotten how. . . . It struck eight times, so I suppose it's what they call eight o'clock up there. . . .

TYLTYL

Light expects me at a quarter to nine. . . . It's because of the Fairy. . . . It's extremely important. . . . I'm off! . . .

GRANNY TYL

Don't leave us like that, just as supper's ready! . . . Quick, quick, let's lay the table outside. . . . I've got some

capital cabbage-soup and a beautiful plum-tart. . . .

(*They get out the table, dishes, plates, etc., and lay for supper outside the door, all helping.*)

TYLTYL

Well, as I've got the Blue Bird. . . . And then it's so long since I tasted cabbage-soup. . . . Ever since I've been travelling. . . . They don't have it at the hotels. . . .

GRANNY TYL

There! . . . That didn't take long! . . . Sit down, children. . . . Don't let us lose time, if you're in a hurry. . . .

(*They have lit the lamp and served the soup. The* GRANDPARENTS *and the* CHILDREN *sit down round the table, jostling and elbowing one another and laughing and screaming with pleasure.*)

TYLTYL (*eating like a glutton*)

How good it is! . . . Oh, how good it is! . . . I want some more! More! . . . (*He brandishes his wooden spoon and noisily hits his plate with it.*)

GAFFER TYL

Come, come, a little more quiet. . . . You're just as ill-behaved as ever; and you'll break your plate. . . .

TYLTYL (*half-raising himself on his stool*)

I want more, more! . . . (*He seizes the tureen, drags it toward him and upsets it and the soup, which trickles over the table and down over their knees and scalds them. Yells and screams of pain.*)

GRANNY TYL

There! . . . I told you so! . . .

GAFFER TYL (*giving* TYLTYL *a loud box on the ear*)

That's one for you! . . .

TYLTYL (*staggered for a moment, next*

puts his hand to his cheek with an expression of rapture)

Oh, that's just like the slaps you used to give me when you were alive! . . . Grandad, how nice it was and how good it makes one feel! . . . I must give you a kiss! . . .

GAFFER TYL

Very well; there's more where that came from, if you like them. . . .

(*The clock strikes half-past eight*)

TYLTYL (*starting up*)

Half-past eight! . . . (*He flings down his spoon.*) Myltyl, we've only just got time! . . .

GRANNY TYL

Oh, I say! . . . Just a few minutes more! . . . Your house isn't on fire! . . . We see you so seldom. . . .

TYLTYL

No, we can't possibly. . . . Light is so kind. . . . And I promised her. . . . Come, Mytyl, come! . . .

GAFFER TYL

Goodness gracious, how tiresome the Living are with all their business and excitement! . . .

TYLTYL (*taking his cage and hurriedly kissing everybody all round*)

Good-bye, grandad. . . . Good-bye, granny. . . . Good-bye, brothers and sisters, Pierrot, Robert, Pauline, Madeleine, Riquette and you, too, Kiki. . . . I feel we mustn't stay. . . . Don't cry, granny; we will come back often. . . .

GRANNY TYL

Come back every day! . . .

TYLTYL

Yes, yes; we will come back as often as we can. . . .

GRANNY TYL

It's our only pleasure and it's such a treat for us when your thoughts visit us! . . .

GAFFER TYL

We have no other amusements. . . .

TYLTYL

Quick, quick! . . . My cage! . . . My bird! . . .

GAFFER TYL (*handing him the cage*)

Here they are! . . . You know, I don't warrant him; and if he's not the right colour . . .

TYLTYL

Good-bye! Good-bye! . . .

THE BROTHERS AND SISTERS TYL

Good-bye, Tyltyl! . . . Good-bye, Mytyl! . . . Remember the barley-sugar! . . . Good-bye! . . . Come again! . . . Come again! . . .

(*They all wave their handkerchiefs while* TYLTYL *and* MYTYL *slowly move away. But already, during the last sentences, the fog of the beginning of the scene has been gradually re-forming, so that, at the end, all has disappeared in the mist and, at the fall of the curtain,* TYLTYL *and* MYTYL *are*

again alone visible under the big oak.)

TYLTYL

It's this way, Mytyl. . . .

MYTYL

Where is Light? . . .

TYLTYL

I don't know. . . . (*Looking at the bird in the cage.*) But the bird is no longer blue! . . . He has turned black! . . .

MYTYL

Give me your hand, little brother. . . . I feel so frightened and so cold. . . .

CURTAIN

Act III.

Scene 1.—*The Palace of* Night.

A large and wonderful hall of an austere, rigid, metallic and sepulchral magnificence, giving the impression of a Greek temple with columns, architraves, flagstones and ornaments of black marble, gold and ebony. The hall is trapezium-shaped. Basalt steps, occupying almost the entire width, divide it into three successive stages, which rise gradually toward the back. On the right and left, between the columns, are doors of sombre bronze. At the back, a monumental door of brass. The palace is lit only by a vague light that seems to emanate mainly from the brilliancy of the marble and the ebony. At the rise of the curtain, Night, *in the form of a very old woman, clad in long, black garments, is seated on the steps*

of the second stage, between two children, of whom one, almost naked, like Cupid, is smiling in a deep sleep, while the other is standing up, motionless and veiled from head to foot.

Enter from the right, in the foreground, the CAT

NIGHT

Who goes there?

THE CAT (*sinking heavily upon the marble steps*)

It is I, Mother Night. . . . I am worn out. . . .

NIGHT

What's the matter, child? . . . You look pale and thin and you are splashed with mud to your very whiskers. . . . Have you been fighting on the tiles again, in the snow and rain? . . .

THE CAT

It has nothing to do with the tiles! . . . It's our secret that's at stake! . . . It's the beginning of the end! . . .

I have managed to escape for a moment to warn you; but I greatly fear that there is nothing to be done. . . .

NIGHT

Why? . . . What has happened? . . .

THE CAT

I have told you of little Tyltyl, the woodcutter's son, and of the magic diamond. . . . Well, he is coming here to demand the Blue Bird of you. . . .

NIGHT

He hasn't got it yet. . . .

THE CAT

He will have it soon, unless we perform some miracle. . . . This is how the matter stands: Light, who is guiding him and betraying us all, for she has placed herself entirely on Man's side, Light has learned that the Blue Bird, the real one, the only one that can live in the light of day, is hidden here, among the blue birds of the dreams that live on the rays of the moon and die as soon as they set eyes on the sun.

. . . She knows that she is forbidden to cross the threshold of your palace, but she is sending the children; and, as you cannot prevent Man from opening the doors of your secrets, I do not know how all this will end. . . . In any case, if, unfortunately, they should lay their hands on the real Blue Bird, there would be nothing for us but to disappear. . . .

NIGHT

Oh dear, oh dear! . . . What times we live in! . . . I never have a moment's peace. . . . I cannot understand Man, these last few years. . . . What is he aiming at? . . . Must he absolutely know everything? . . . Already he has captured a third of my Mysteries, all my Terrors are afraid and dare not leave the house, my Ghosts have taken flight, the greater part of my Sicknesses are ill. . . .

THE CAT

I know, Mother Night, I know, the times are hard and we are almost alone in

our struggle against Man. . . . But I hear them coming. . . . I see only one way: as they are children, we must give them such a fright that they will not dare to persist or to open the great door at the back, behind which they would find the Birds of the Moon. . . . The secrets of the other caverns will be enough to distract their attention and terrify them. . . .

NIGHT (*listening to a sound outside*)

What do I hear? . . . Are there many of them? . . .

THE CAT

It is nothing; it is our friends, Bread and Sugar; Water is not very well and Fire could not come, because he is related to Light. . . . The Dog is the only one who is not on our side; but it is never possible to keep him away. . . .

(*Enter timidly, on the right, in the foreground,* TYLTYL, MYTYL, BREAD, SUGAR *and the* DOG.)

THE CAT (*rushing up to* TYLTYL)

This way, little master, this way. . . . I have told Night, who is delighted to see you. . . . You must forgive her, she is a little indisposed; that is why she was not able to come to meet you. . . .

TYLTYL

Good-day, Mrs. Night. . . .

NIGHT (*in an offended voice*)

Good-day? . . . I am not used to that. . . . You might say, Good-night, or, at least, Good-evening. . . .

TYLTYL (*mortified*)

I beg your pardon, ma'am. . . . I did not know. . . . (*Pointing to the two* CHILDREN.) Are those your two little boys? . . . They are very nice. . . .

NIGHT

This is Sleep. . . .

TYLTYL

Why is he so fat? . . .

NIGHT

That is because he sleeps well. . . .

TYLTYL

And the other, hiding himself? . . . Why does he veil his face? . . . Is he ill? . . . What is his name? . . .

NIGHT

That is Sleep's sister. . . . It is better not to mention her name. . . .

TYLTYL

Why? . . .

NIGHT

Because her name is not pleasant to hear. . . . But let us talk of something else. . . . The Cat tells me that you have come here to look for the Blue Bird. . . .

TYLTYL

Yes, ma'am, if you will allow me. . . . Will you tell me where he is? . . .

NIGHT

I don't know, dear. . . . All I can say is that he is not here. . . . I have never seen him. . . .

TYLTYL

Yes, yes. . . . Light told me that he was here; and Light knows what she is say-

ing. . . . Will you hand me your keys? . . .

NIGHT

But you must understand, dear, that I cannot give my keys like that to the first comer. . . . I have the keeping of all Nature's secrets and I am absolutely forbidden to deliver them to anybody, especially to a child. . . .

TYLTYL

You have no right to refuse them to Man when he asks you for them. . . . I know that. . . .

NIGHT

Who told you? . . .

TYLTYL

Light. . . .

NIGHT

Light again! Always Light! . . . How dare she interfere, how dare she? . . .

THE DOG

Shall I take them from her by force, my little god? . . .

TYLTYL

Hold your tongue, keep quiet and try to be-

have. . . . (*To* NIGHT) Come, madam, give me your keys, please. . . .

NIGHT

Have you the sign, at least? . . . Where is it? . . .

TYLTYL (*touching his hat*)

Behold the Diamond! . . .

NIGHT (*resigning herself to the inevitable*)

Well, then . . . Here is the key that opens all the doors of the hall. . . . Look to yourself if you meet with a misfortune. . . . I will not be responsible. . . .

BREAD (*very anxiously*)

Is it dangerous? . . .

NIGHT

Dangerous? . . . I will go so far as to say that I myself do not know what I shall do when certain of those bronze doors open upon the abyss. . . . All around the hall, in each of those basalt caves, are all the evils, all the plagues, all the sicknesses, all the terrors, all the catastrophes, all the mysteries that have afflicted life since the beginning of the world. . . . I have

had trouble enough to imprison them there with the aid of Destiny; and it is not without difficulty, I assure you, that I keep some little order among those undisciplined characters. . . . You have seen what happens when one of them escapes and shows itself on earth. . . .

BREAD

My great age, my experience and my devotion make me the natural protector of these two children; therefore, Mrs. Night, permit me to ask you a question. . . .

NIGHT

Certainly. . . .

BREAD

In case of danger, which is the way of escape? . . .

NIGHT

There is no way of escape.

TYLTYL (*taking the key and climbing the first steps*)

Let us begin here. . . . What is behind this bronze door? . . .

NIGHT

I think it is the Ghosts. . . . It is long since I opened the door and since they came out. . . .

TYLTYL (*placing the key in the lock*)

I will see. . . . (*To* BREAD) Have you the cage for the Blue Bird? . . .

BREAD (*with chattering teeth*)

I'm not frightened, but don't you think it would be better not to open the door, but to peep through the keyhole? . . .

TYLTYL

I don't want your advice. . . .

MYTYL (*suddenly beginning to cry*)

I am frightened! . . . Where is Sugar? . . . I want to go home! . . .

SUGAR (*eagerly, obsequiously*)

Here I am, miss, here I am. . . . Don't cry, I will break off one of my fingers so that you may have a sugar-stick. . . .

TYLTYL

Enough of this! . . .

(*He turns the key and cautiously opens the door. Forthwith, five or six* GHOSTS *of*

strange and different forms escape and disperse on every side. MYTYL *gives a scream of affright.* BREAD, *terrified, throws away the cage and goes and hides at the back of the hall, while* NIGHT, *running after the* GHOSTS, *cries out to* TYLTYL.)

NIGHT

Quick! Quick! . . . Shut the door! . . . They will all escape and we should never be able to catch them again! . . . They have felt bored in there, ever since Man ceased to take them seriously. . . . (*She runs after the* GHOSTS *and endeavours, with the aid of a whip formed of snakes, to drive them back to the door of their prison.*) Help me! . . . Here! . . . Here! . . .

TYLTYL (*to the* DOG)

Help her, Tylô, at them! . . .

THE DOG (*leaping up and barking*)

Yes, yes, yes! . . .

TYLTYL

And Bread, where's Bread? . . .

BREAD (*at the back of the hall*)

Here. . . . I am near the door to prevent them from going out. . . .

(*One of the* GHOSTS *moves in that direction and he rushes away at full speed, uttering yells of terror.*)

NIGHT (*to three* GHOSTS *whom she has seized by the neck*)

This way, you! . . . (*To* TYLTYL) Open the door a little. . . . (*She pushes the* GHOSTS *into the cave.*) There, that's it. . . . (*The* DOG *brings up two more.*) And these two. . . . Come, quick, in with you! . . . You know you're only allowed out on All-hallows. . . . (*She closes the door.*)

TYLTYL (*going to another door*)

What's behind this one? . . .

NIGHT

What is the good? . . . I have already told

for dancing. . . . The sky is overcast and heavily clouded. . . . Come, quick, in with you, or I will go and fetch a ray of sunlight! . . . (*The* STARS, PERFUMES, *etc., take to flight in dismay and rush back into the cavern; and the door is closed upon them. At the same time, the song of the* NIGHTINGALE *ceases.*)

TYLTYL (*going to the door at the back*)

Here is the great middle door. . . .

NIGHT (*gravely*)

Do not open that one. . . .

TYLTYL

Why not? . . .

NIGHT

Because it's not allowed. . . .

TYLTYL

Then it's here that the Blue Bird is hidden; Light told me so. . . .

NIGHT (*maternally*)

Listen to me, child. . . . I have been kind and indulgent. . . . I have done for you what I have never done for any one before. . . . I have given up all

my secrets to you. . . . I like you, I feel pity for your youth and innocence and I am speaking to you as a mother. . . . Listen to me, my child, and believe me; relinquish your quest, go no further, do not tempt fate, do not open that door. . . .

TYLTYL (*a little shaken*)

But why? . . .

NIGHT

Because I do not wish you to be lost. . . . Because not one of those, do you hear, not one of those who have opened it, were it but by a hair's breadth, has ever returned alive to the light of day. . . . Because every awful thing imaginable, because all the terrors, all the horrors of which men speak on earth are as nothing compared with the most harmless of those which assail a man from the moment when his eye lights upon the first threats of the abyss to which no one dares give a name. . . . So much so that I myself, if you are bent, in spite of everything,

TYLTYL (*going to the next door*)

Let us look at this one. . . . What is in here? . . .

NIGHT

Take care! . . . It is the Wars. . . . They are more terrible and powerful than ever. . . . Heaven knows what would happen if one of them escaped! . . . . Fortunately, they are rather heavy and slow-moving. . . . But we must stand ready to push back the door, all of us together, while you take a rapid glance into the cavern. . . .

(TYLTYL, *with a thousand precautions, opens the door ajar so that there is only a little gap to which he can put his eye. He at once doubles his back against the door, shouting.*)

TYLTYL

Quick! Quick! . . . Push with all your might! . . . They have seen me!

. . . They are all coming! . . . They are breaking down the door! . . .

NIGHT

Come, all together! . . . Push hard! . . . Bread, what are you doing? . . . Push, all of you! . . . How strong they are! . . . Ah, that's it! . . . They are giving way! . . . It was high time! . . . Did you see them? . . .

TYLTYL

Yes, yes! . . . They are huge and awful! . . . I don't think that they have the Blue Bird. . . .

NIGHT

You may be sure they haven't. . . . If they had, they would eat him at once. . . . Well, have you had enough of it? . . . You see there is nothing to be done. . . .

TYLTYL

I must see everything. . . . Light said so. . . .

NIGHT

Light said so! . . . It's an easy thing to

say when one's afraid and stays at home. . . .

TYLTYL

Let us go to the next. . . . What is in here? . . .

NIGHT

This is where I lock up the Shades and the Terrors. . . .

TYLTYL

Can I open the door? . . .

NIGHT

Certainly. . . . They are pretty quiet; they are like the Sicknesses. . . .

TYLTYL (*half-opening the door, with a certain mistrustfulness, and taking a look into the cavern*)

Are they not there? . . .

NIGHT (*looking into the cavern in her turn*)

Well, Shades, what are you doing? . . . Come out for a moment and stretch your legs; it will do you good. . . . And the Terrors also. . . . There is nothing to be afraid of. . . . (*A few* SHADES *and a few* TERRORS, *in the*

shape of women, shrouded, the former in black veils and the latter in greenish veils, piteously venture to take a few steps outside the cavern; and then, upon a movement of TYLTYL's, *hastily run back again.*) Come, don't be afraid. . . . It's only a child; he won't hurt you. . . . (*To* TYLTYL) They have become extremely timid, except the great ones, those whom you see at the back. . . .

TYLTYL (*looking into the depths of the cave*)

Oh, how terrifying they are! . . .

NIGHT

They are chained up. . . . They are the only ones that are not afraid of Man. . . . But shut the door, lest they should grow angry. . . .

TYLTYL (*going to the next door*)

I say! . . . This is a darker one. . . . What is here?

NIGHT

There are several Mysteries behind this one. . . . If you are absolutely bent

upon it, you may open it too. . . . But don't go in. . . . Be very cautious and let us get ready to push back the door, as we did with the Wars. . . .

TYLTYL (*half-opening the door; with unparalleled precautions and passing his head fearsomely through the aperture*)

Oh! . . . How cold! . . . My eyes are smarting! . . . Shut it quickly! . . . Push, oh, push! They are pushing against us! . . . (NIGHT, *the* DOG, *the* CAT *and* SUGAR *push back the door.*) Oh, I saw! . . .

NIGHT

What? . . .

TYLTYL (*upset*)

I don't know, it was awful! . . . They were all seated like monsters without eyes. . . . Who was the giant who tried to seize me? . . .

NIGHT

It was probably Silence; he has charge of this door. . . . It appears to have

been alarming? . . . You are quite pale still and trembling all over. . . .

TYLTYL

Yes, I would never have believed. . . . I had never seen. . . . And my hands are frozen. . . .

NIGHT

It will be worse presently if you go on. . . .

TYLTYL (*going to the next door*)

And this one? . . . Is this terrible also? . . .

NIGHT

No; there is a little of everything here. . . . It is where I keep the unemployed Stars, my personal Perfumes, a few Glimmers that belong to me, such as Will-o'-the-Wisps, Glow-worms and Fireflies, also the Dew, the Song of the Nightingales and so on. . . .

TYLTYL

Just so, the Stars, the Song of the Nightingales. . . . This must be the door. . . .

NIGHT

Open it, if you like; there is nothing very bad inside. . . .

(TYLTYL *throws the door wide open. The* STARS, *in the shape of beautiful young girls veiled in many-coloured radiancy, escape from their prison, disperse over the hall and form graceful groups on the steps and around the columns, bathed in a sort of luminous penumbra. The* PERFUMES OF THE NIGHT, *who are almost invisible, the* WILL-O'-THE-WISPS, *the* FIREFLIES *and the transparent* DEW *join them, while the* SONG OF THE NIGHTINGALES *streams from the cavern and floods the Palace of* NIGHT.)

MYTYL (*clapping her hands with delight*)
Oh, what pretty ladies! . . .

TYLTYL
And how well they dance! . . .

MYTYL
And how sweet they smell! . . .

TYLTYL
And how beautifully they sing! . . .

MYTYL
What are those, whom one can hardly see? . . .

NIGHT
Those are the Perfumes of my Shadow.

TYLTYL
And those others, over there, in spun glass? . . .

NIGHT
They are the Dew of the plains and forests. . . . But enough! . . . They would never have done. . . . It is the devil's own business to get them back, once they begin to dance. . . . (*Clapping her hands together.*) Now then, Stars, quick! . . . This is not the time

for dancing. . . . The sky is overcast and heavily clouded. . . . Come, quick, in with you, or I will go and fetch a ray of sunlight! . . . (*The* STARS, PERFUMES, *etc., take to flight in dismay and rush back into the cavern; and the door is closed upon them. At the same time, the song of the* NIGHTINGALE *ceases.*)

TYLTYL (*going to the door at the back*)

Here is the great middle door. . . .

NIGHT (*gravely*)

Do not open that one. . . .

TYLTYL

Why not? . . .

NIGHT

Because it's not allowed. . . .

TYLTYL

Then it's here that the Blue Bird is hidden; Light told me so. . . .

NIGHT (*maternally*)

Listen to me, child. . . . I have been kind and indulgent. . . . I have done for you what I have never done for any one before. . . . I have given up all

my secrets to you. . . . I like you, I feel pity for your youth and innocence and I am speaking to you as a mother. . . . Listen to me, my child, and believe me; relinquish your quest, go no further, do not tempt fate, do not open that door. . . .

TYLTYL (*a little shaken*)

But why? . . .

NIGHT

Because I do not wish you to be lost. . . . Because not one of those, do you hear, not one of those who have opened it, were it but by a hair's breadth, has ever returned alive to the light of day. . . . Because every awful thing imaginable, because all the terrors, all the horrors of which men speak on earth are as nothing compared with the most harmless of those which assail a man from the moment when his eye lights upon the first threats of the abyss to which no one dares give a name. . . . So much so that I myself, if you are bent, in spite of everything,

upon touching that door, will ask you to wait until I have sought safety in my windowless tower. . . . Now it is for you to know, for you to reflect. . . .

(MYTYL, *all in tears, utters cries of inarticulate terror and tries to drag* TYLTYL *away.*)

BREAD (*with chattering teeth*)

Don't do it, master dear! . . . (*Flinging himself on his knees*) Take pity on us! . . . I implore you on my knees. . . . You see that Night is right. . . .

THE CAT

You are sacrificing the lives of all of us. . . .

TYLTYL

I must open the door. . . .

MYTYL (*stamping her feet, amid her sobs*)

I won't! . . . I sha'n't! . . .

TYLTYL

Sugar and Bread, take Mytyl by the hand and run away with her. . . . I am going to open the door. . . .

NIGHT

Run for your lives! . . . Come quickly! . . . It is time! . . . (*She flees.*)

BREAD (*fleeing wildly*)

At least wait till we are at the end of the hall! . . .

THE CAT (*also fleeing*)

Wait! Wait! . . .

(*They hide behind the columns at the other end of the hall.* TYLTYL *remains alone with the* DOG *by the monumental door.*)

THE DOG (*panting and hiccoughing with suppressed fright*)

I shall stay, I shall stay! . . . I'm not afraid! . . . I shall stay! . . . I shall stay with my little god! . . . I shall stay! . . . I shall stay! . . .

TYLTYL (*patting the* DOG)

That's right, Tylô, that's right! . . . Kiss me. . . . You and I are two. . . . And now, steady! . . .

(*He places the key in the lock. A cry of alarm comes from*

the other end of the hall, where the runaways have taken refuge. The key has hardly touched the door before its tall and wide leaves open in the middle, glide apart and disappear on either side in the thickness of the walls, suddenly revealing the most unexpected of gardens, unreal, infinite and ineffable, a dream-garden bathed in nocturnal light, where, among stars and planets, illumining all that they touch, flying ceaselessly from jewel to jewel and from moonbeam to moonbeam, fairy-like blue birds hover perpetually and harmoniously down to the confines of the horizon, birds innumerable to the point of appearing to be the breath, the azured

atmosphere, the very substance of the wonderful garden.)

TYLTYL (*dazzled, bewildered, standing in the light of the garden*)

Oh! . . . Heaven! . . . (*Turning to those who have fled*) Come quickly! . . . They are here! . . . It's they, it's they, it's they! . . . We have them at last! . . . Thousands of blue birds! . . . Millions! . . . Thousands of millions! . . . There will be too many! . . . Come, Mytyl! . . . Come, Tylô! . . . Come, all! . . . Help me! . . . (*Darting in among the birds.*) You can catch them by handfuls! . . . They are not shy! . . . They are not afraid of us! . . . Here! Here! . . . (MYTYL *and the others run up. They all enter the dazzling garden, except* NIGHT *and the* CAT.) You see! . . . There are too many of them! . . . They fly into my hands! . . . Look, they are eating the moonbeams! . . . Mytyl,

where are you? . . . There are so many blue wings, so many feathers falling that one cannot see anything for them! . . . Don't bite them, Tylô! . . . Don't hurt them! . . . Take them very gently! . . .

MYTYL (*covered with blue birds*)

I have caught seven already! . . . Oh, how they flap their wings! . . . I can't hold them! . . .

TYLTYL

Nor can I! . . . I have too many of them! . . . They're escaping! . . . They're coming back! . . . Tylô has some, too! . . . They will drag us with them! . . . They will take us up to the sky! . . . Quick, let us go out this way! . . . Light is waiting for us! . . . How pleased she will be! . . .

This way, this way! . . .

(*They escape from the garden, with their hands full of struggling birds, and, crossing the whole hall amid the*

mad whirl of the azure wings, go out on the right, where they first entered, followed by BREAD *and* SUGAR, *who have caught no birds.* NIGHT *and the* CAT, *left alone, return to the back of the stage and look anxiously into the garden.*)

NIGHT

Haven't they got him? . . .

THE CAT

No. . . . I see him there, on that moonbeam. . . . They could not reach him, he kept too high. . . .

(*The* CURTAIN *falls. Immediately after, before the dropped curtain,* ENTER, *at the same time, on the left,* LIGHT *and, on the right,* TYLTYL, MYTYL *and the* DOG, *who run up all covered by the birds which they have captured. But already the birds appear*

lifeless and, with hanging heads and drooping wings, are nothing more in their hands than inert remains.)

LIGHT

Well, have you caught him? . . .

TYLTYL

Yes, yes! . . . As many as we wanted! . . . There are thousands of them! . . . Here they are! . . . Do you see them? . . . (*Looking at the birds, which he holds out to* LIGHT, *and perceiving that they are dead*) Why, they are dead! . . . What have they done to them? . . . Yours, too, Mytyl? . . . Tylô's also? . . . (*Angrily flinging down the dead bodies of the birds*) Oh, this is too bad? . . . Who killed them? . . . I am too unhappy! . . . (*He hides his head in his arms and his whole frame is shaken with sobs.*)

LIGHT (*pressing him maternally in her arms*)

Do not cry, my child. . . . You did not catch the one that is able to live in broad daylight. . . . He has gone elsewhere. . . . We shall find him again. . . .

THE DOG (*looking at the dead birds*) Are they good to eat? . . .

(*They all go out on the left.*)

SCENE 2.—*The Forest*

A forest. It is night. The moon is shining. Old trees of various kinds, notably an OAK, *a* BEECH, *an* ELM, *a* POPLAR, *a* FIR-TREE, *a* CYPRESS, *a* LIME-TREE, *a* CHESTNUT-TREE, *etc.*

ENTER *the* CAT.

THE CAT (*bowing to the trees in turn*) To all the trees here present, greeting! . . .

THE TREES (*murmuring in their leaves*) Greeting! . . .

THE CAT

This is a great day, a day of days! . . . Our enemy is coming to set free your

energies and to deliver himself into your hands. . . . It is Tyltyl, the son of the wood-cutter, who has done you so much harm. . . . He is seeking the Blue Bird, whom you have kept hidden from Man since the beginning of the world and who alone knows our secret. . . . (*A murmuring in the leaves.*) What do you say? . . . Ah, it's the Poplar! . . . Yes, he possesses a diamond which has the virtue of setting free our spirits for a moment; he can compel us to hand over the Blue Bird and thenceforth we shall be definitely at Man's mercy. . . . (*A murmuring in the leaves.*) Who is speaking? . . . Ah, the Oak! . . . How are you? . . . (*A murmuring in the leaves of the* OAK.) Still got your cold? . . . Does the Liquorice no longer look after you? . . . Can't you throw off your rheumatism? . . . Believe me, that's because of the moss; you put too much of it on your feet. . . . Is the Blue

Bird still with you? . . . (*A murmuring in the leaves of the* OAK.) I beg your pardon? . . . Yes, there is no room for hesitation; we must take the opportunity; he must he done away with. . . . (*A murmuring in the leaves.*) I didn't quite catch. . . . Oh, yes, he is with his little sister; she must die, too. . . . (*A murmuring in the leaves.*) Yes, they have the Dog with them; there is no keeping him away. . . . (*A murmuring in the leaves.*) What did you say? . . . Bribe him? . . . Impossible. . . . I have tried everything. . . . (*A murmuring in the leaves.*) Ah, is that you, Fir-Tree? . . . Yes, get four planks ready. . . . Yes, there are Fire, Sugar, Water and Bread besides. . . . They are all with us, except Bread, who is rather doubtful. . . . Light alone is on Man's side; but she won't come. . . . I made the children believe that they ought to steal away while she was asleep. . . . There

never was such an opportunity. . . . (*A murmuring in the leaves.*) Ah, that's the Beech's voice! . . . Yes, you are right; we must inform the animals. . . . Has the Rabbit got his drum? . . . Is he with you? . . . Good, let him beat the troop at once. . . . Here they are! . . .

(*The roll of the* RABBIT'S *drum is heard, diminishing in the distance. Enter* TYLTYL, MYTYL *and the* DOG.)

TYLTYL

Is this the place? . . .

THE CAT (*obsequiously, eagerly, mealy-mouthed, rushing to meet the* CHILDREN)

Ah, there you are, my little master! . . . How well you look and how pretty, this evening! . . . I went before you to announce your arrival. . . . All is going well. We shall have the Blue Bird to-night, I am sure. . . . I have just sent the Rabbit to beat the troop in order to convoke the principal ani-

mals of the country. . . . You can hear them already among the foliage. . . . Listen! . . . They are a little shy and dare not come near. . . . (*The sounds are heard of different animals, such as cows, pigs, horses, donkeys, etc. The* CAT, *aside, to* TYLTYL, *taking him apart*) But why have you brought the Dog? . . . I have told you he is on the worst terms with everybody, even the trees. . . . I fear that his odious presence will spoil everything. . . .

TYLTYL

I could not get rid of him. . . . (*To the* DOG, *threatening him*) Go away, you ugly thing! . . .

THE DOG

Who? . . . I? . . . Why? . . . What have I done? . . .

TYLTYL

I tell you, go away! . . . We don't want you here and there's an end of it. . . . You're a nuisance, there! . . .

THE DOG

I sha'n't say a word. . . . I shall follow you at a distance. . . . They sha'n't see me. . . . Shall I beg? . . .

THE CAT (*aside, to* TYLTYL)

Do you allow this disobedience? . . . Hit him on the nose with your stick; he is really unbearable! . . .

TYLTYL (*beating the* DOG)

There, that will teach you to be more obedient! . . .

THE DOG (*yelling*)

Ow! Ow! Ow! . . .

TYLTYL

What do you say? . . .

THE DOG

I must kiss you now you've beaten me! . . . (*He covers* TYLTYL *with violent kisses and embraces.*)

TYLTYL

Come. . . . That will do. . . . That's enough. . . . Go away! . . .

MYTYL

No, no; I want him to stay. . . . I am

afraid of everything when he is not there. . . .

THE DOG (*leaping up and almost upsetting* MYTYL, *whom he overwhelms with hurried and enthusiastic kisses*)

Oh, the dear little girl! . . . How beautiful she is! . . . How good she is! . . . How beautiful she is, how sweet she is! . . . I must kiss her! . . . Once more, once more, once more! . . .

THE CAT

What an idiot! . . . Well, we shall see! . . . Let us lose no time. . . . Turn the diamond. . . .

TYLTYL

Where shall I stand? . . .

THE CAT

In this moonbeam; you will see better. . . . There, turn it gently! . . .

(TYLTYL *turns the Diamond. A long-drawn-out rustling shakes the leaves and branches. The oldest and most stately trunks open to make way for the soul which*

each of them contains. The appearance of these souls differs according to the appearance and the character of the trees which they represent. The soul of the ELM, *for instance, is a sort of pursy, pot-bellied, crabbed gnome; the* LIME-TREE *is placid, familiar and jovial; the* BEECH, *elegant and agile; the* BIRCH, *white, reserved and restless; the* WILLOW, *stunted, dishevelled and plaintive; the* FIR-TREE, *tall, lean and taciturn; the* CYPRESS, *tragic; the* CHESTNUT-TREE, *pretentious and rather dandified; the* POPLAR, *sprightly, cumbersome, talkative. Some emerge slowly from their trunks, torpidly stretching themselves, as though they had been imprisoned or*

asleep for ages; others leap out actively, eagerly; and all come and stand in a circle round the two CHILDREN, *while keeping as near as they can to the tree in which they were born.*)

THE POPLAR (*running up first and screaming at the top of his voice*)

Men? . . . Little men! . . . We shall be able to talk to them! . . . We've done with silence! . . . Done with it! . . . Where do they come from? . . . Who are they? . . . What are they? . . . (*To the* LIME-TREE, *who comes forward quietly smoking his pipe*) Do you know them, Daddy Lime-Tree? . . .

THE LIME-TREE

I do not remember ever having seen them. . . .

THE POPLAR

Oh, yes, you must have! . . . You know all the men; you're always hanging about their houses. . . .

THE LIME-TREE (*examining the* CHILDREN)

No, I assure you. . . . I don't know them. . . . They are too young still. . . . I only know the lovers who come to see me by moonlight and the topers who drink their beer under my branches. . . .

THE CHESTNUT-TREE (*affectedly adjusting his eyeglass*)

Who are these? . . . Are they poor people from the country? . . .

THE POPLAR

Oh, as for you, Mr. Chestnut-Tree, ever since you have refused to show yourself except in the streets of the big towns . . .

THE WILLOW (*hobbling along in a pair of wooden shoes*)

Oh dear, oh dear! . . . They have come to cut off my head and arms again for fagots! . . .

THE POPLAR

Silence! . . . Here is the Oak leaving his palace! . . . He looks far from well

this evening. . . . Don't you think he is growing very old? . . . What can his age be? . . . The Fir-tree says he is four thousand; but I am sure that he exaggerates. . . . Listen; he will tell us all about it. . . .

(*The* OAK *comes slowly forward. He is fabulously old, crowned with mistletoe and clad in a long green gown edged with moss and lichen. He is blind; his white beard streams in the wind. He leans with one hand on a knotty stick and with the other on a young* OAKLING, *who serves as his guide. The Blue Bird is perched on his shoulder. At his approach, the other trees draw themselves up in a row and bow respectfully.*)

TYLTYL

He has the Blue Bird! . . . Quick!

Quick! . . . Here! . . . Give it to me! . . .

THE TREES

Silence! . . .

THE CAT (*to* TYLTYL)

Take off your hat, it's the Oak! . . .

THE OAK (*to* TYLTYL)

Who are you? . . .

TYLTYL

I am Tyltyl, sir. . . . When can I have the Blue Bird? . . .

THE OAK

Tyltyl, the wood-cutter's son? . . .

TYLTYL

Yes, sir. . . .

THE OAK

Your father has done us much harm. . . . In my family alone, he has put to death six hundred of my sons, four hundred and seventy-five uncles and aunts, twelve hundred cousins of both sexes, three hundred and eighty daughters-in-law, and twelve thousand great-grandsons! . . .

TYLTYL

I know nothing about it, sir. . . . He did not do it on purpose. . . .

THE OAK

What have you come here for; and why have you made our souls leave their abodes? . . .

TYLTYL

I beg your pardon, sir, for disturbing you. . . . The Cat said that you would tell us where the Blue Bird was. . . .

THE OAK

Yes, I know that you are looking for the Blue Bird, that is to say, the great secret of things and of happiness, so that Man may make our servitude still harder. . . .

TYLTYL

Oh, no, sir; it is for the Fairy Bérylune's little girl, who is very ill. . . .

THE OAK (*laying silence upon him with a gesture*)

Enough! . . . I do not hear the Animals. . . . Where are they? . . . All

this concerns them as much as us. . . . We, the Trees, must not assume the responsibility alone for the grave measures that have become necessary. . . . On the day when MAN hears that we have done what we are about to do, there will be terrible reprisals. . . . It is right, therefore, that our agreement should be unanimous, so that our silence may be the same. . . .

THE FIR-TREE (*looking over the top of the other trees*)

The Animals are coming. . . . They are following the Rabbit. . . . Here are the souls of the Horse, the Bull, the Ox, the Cow, the Wolf, the Sheep, the Pig, the Cock, the Goat, the Ass, and the Bear. . . .

(*Enter the souls of the* ANIMALS, *who, as the* FIR-TREE *utters their names, come forward and sit down among the trees, with the exception of the soul of the* GOAT, *who roams to and fro, and*

of the PIG, *who snuffles among the roots.*)

THE OAK

Are all here present? . . .

THE RABBIT

The Hen could not leave her eggs, the Hare is out on a run, the Stag has a pain in his horns, the Fox is ill—here is the doctor's certificate—the Goose did not understand and the Turkey flew into a passion. . . .

THE OAK

These abstentions are most regrettable. . . . However, we have a quorum. . . . You know, my brothers, the nature of our business. The child you see before you, thanks to a talisman stolen from the powers of Earth, is able to take possession of the Blue Bird and thus to snatch from us the secret which we have kept since the origin of life. . . . Now we know enough of Man to entertain no doubt as to the fate which he reserves for us once he is in posses-

sion of this secret. That is why it seems to me that any hesitation would be both foolish and criminal. . . . It is a serious moment; the child must be done away with before it is too late. . . .

TYLTYL

What is he saying? . . .

THE DOG (*prowling round the* OAK *and showing his fangs*)

Do you see my teeth, you old cripple? . . .

THE BEECH (*indignantly*)

He is insulting the Oak! . . .

THE OAK

Is that the Dog? . . . Drive him out! We must suffer no traitors among us! . . .

THE CAT (*aside, to* TYLTYL)

Send the Dog away. . . . It's a misunderstanding. . . . Leave it to me; I will arrange things. . . . But send him away as quick as you can. . . .

TYLTYL (*to the* DOG)

Will you be off! . . .

THE DOG

Do let me worry the gouty old beggar's

moss slippers! . . . It will be such a joke! . . .

TYLTYL

Hold your tongue! . . . And be off with you! . . . Be off, you ugly brute! . . .

THE DOG

All right, all right, I'm going. . . . I'll come back when you want me. . . .

THE CAT (*aside, to* TYLTYL)

It would be a good thing to chain him up, or he will commit some folly; the Trees will be angry and all will end badly. . . .

TYLTYL

What can I do? . . . I have lost his leash. . . .

THE CAT

Here's the Ivy just coming along with strong bonds. . . .

THE DOG (*growling*)

I'll come back, I'll come back! . . . Ugh! Goutytoes! Timbertoes! . . . Pack of old stunted growths, pack of old roots! . . . It's the Cat who's at the bottom of all this! . . . I'll be even

with him! . . . What have you been whispering about, you sneak, you tiger, you Judas! . . . Wow, wow, wow! . . .

THE CAT

You see, he insults everybody. . . .

TYLTYL

Yes, he is unbearable and one can't hear one's self speak. . . . Mr. Ivy, will you chain him up, please? . . .

THE IVY (*timorously going up to the* DOG)

Won't he bite? . . .

THE DOG (*growling*)

On the contrary, on the contrary! . . . He's going to kiss you! . . . Just wait and see! . . . Come along, come along, you old ball of twine, you! . . .

TYLTYL (*threatening him with his stick*)

Tylô! . . .

THE DOG (*cringing at* TYLTYL'S *feet and wagging his tail*)

What am I to do, my little god?

TYLTYL

Lie down flat! . . . Obey the Ivy. . . . Let him bind you, or. . . .

THE DOG (*growling between his teeth, while the* IVY *binds him*)

Ball of twine! . . . Hunk of yarn! . . . Hangman's rope! . . . Calves' leash! . . . Look, my little god! . . . He's cutting my paws! . . . He's choking me! . . .

TYLTYL

I don't care! . . . It's your own fault. . . . Hold your tongue; be quiet; you're unbearable! . . .

THE DOG

You're wrong, for all that. . . . They mean mischief. . . . Take care, my little god! . . . He's closing my mouth! . . . I can't speak! . . .

THE IVY (*who has tied up the* DOG *like a parcel*)

Where shall we put him? . . . I've muzzled him finely. . . . He can't utter a word. . . .

THE OAK

Fasten him tight down there, behind my trunk, to my big root. . . . We will decide later what had best be done with him. . . .

(*The* IVY *and the* POPLAR *carry the* DOG *behind the* OAK'S *trunk.*)

THE OAK

Is that done? . . . Well, now that we are rid of this inconvenient witness, of this renegade, let us deliberate in accordance with justice and truth. . . . I will not conceal from you the deep and painful nature of my emotion. . . . This is the first time that it is given to us to judge Man and make him feel our power. . . . I do not think that, after the harm which he has done us, after the monstrous injustice which we have suffered, there can remain the least doubt as to the sentence that awaits him. . . .

ALL THE TREES *and* ALL THE ANIMALS

No! No! No! . . . No doubt at all! . . .

Hanging! . . . Death! . . . The injustice has been too great! . . . The abuse too wicked! . . . It has lasted too long! . . . Crush him! . . . Eat him! . . . At once! . . . Here and now! . . .

TYLTYL (*to the* CAT)

What is the matter with them? . . . Are they displeased? . . .

THE CAT

Don't be alarmed. . . . They are a little annoyed because Spring is late. . . . Leave it to me; I will settle it all. . . .

THE OAK

This unanimity was inevitable. . . . We must now decide, in order to avoid reprisals, which form of execution will be the most practical, the easiest, the quickest and the safest, which will leave the fewest accusing traces when Man finds the little bodies in the forest. . . .

TYLTYL

What is all this about? . . . What is he

driving at? . . . I am getting tired of this. . . . He has got the Blue Bird; let him hand it over. . . .

THE BULL (*coming forward*)

The most practical and the surest way is a good butt with the horns in the pit of the stomach. . . . Shall I go at him? . . .

THE OAK

Who speaks? . . .

THE CAT

It's the Bull.

THE COW

It would be better to keep quiet. . . . I won't meddle with it. . . . I have all the grass to browse in the field which you can see down there in the blue light of the moon. . . . I have quite enough to do. . . .

THE OX

I also. . . . However, I agree to everything beforehand. . . .

THE BEECH

I can offer my highest branch to hang them on. . . .

THE IVY

And I the slip-knot. . . .

THE FIR-TREE

And I the four planks for their little coffin. . . .

THE CYPRESS

And I a perpetual grant of a tomb. . . .

THE WILLOW

The simplest way would be to drown them in one of my rivers. . . . I will take charge of that. . . .

THE LIME-TREE (*in a conciliatory tone*)

Come, come. . . . Is it really necessary to go to such extremities? . . . They are very young. . . . We could quite simply prevent them from doing any harm by keeping them prisoners in an enclosure which I will undertake to form by planting myself all around. . . .

THE OAK

Who speaks? . . . I seem to recognise the honeyed accents of the Lime-tree. . . .

THE FIR-TREE

Yes, it's he. . . .

THE OAK

So there is a renegade among us, as among the Animals? . . . Hitherto we have only had to deplore the disloyalty of the Fruit-trees; but they are not real trees. . . .

THE PIG (*rolling his small eyes gluttonously*)

I think we should first eat the little girl. . . . She ought to be very tender. . . .

TYLTYL

What's he saying? . . . Just wait a bit, you . . .

THE CAT

I don't know what is the matter with them; but things are beginning to look badly. . . .

THE OAK

Silence! . . . What we have to decide is which of us shall have the honour of striking the first blow, who shall ward off from our tops the greatest danger that has threatened us since the birth of Man. . . .

THE FIR-TREE

That honour falls to you, our king and our patriarch. . . .

THE OAK

Is that the Fir-tree speaking? . . . Alas, I am too old! . . . I am blind and infirm and my numbed arms no longer obey me. . . . No, to you, brother, ever green, ever upright, to you, who have witnessed the birth of most of these trees, to you be the glory, in default of myself, of the noble act of our deliverance. . . .

THE FIR-TREE

I thank you, venerable father. . . . But as I shall, in any case, have the honour of burying the two victims, I should be afraid of arousing the just jealousy of my colleagues; and I think that, next to ourselves, the oldest and the worthiest and the one that owns the best club is the Beech. . . .

THE BEECH

You know I am worm-eaten and my club is no longer to be relied upon. . . . But

the Elm and the Cypress have powerful weapons. . . .

THE ELM

I should be only too pleased; but I can hardly stand upright. . . . A mole twisted my great toe last night. . . .

THE CYPRESS

As for me, I am ready. . . . But, like my brother, the Fir-tree, I shall have, if not the privilege of burying them, at least the advantage of weeping over their tomb. . . . It would be an unlawful plurality of offices. . . . Ask the Poplar. . . .

THE POPLAR

Me? . . . Are you serious? . . . Why, my wood is more tender than the flesh of a child! . . . And, besides, I don't know what's the matter with me. . . . I am shivering with fever. . . . Just look at my leaves. . . . I must have caught cold at sunrise this morning. . . .

THE OAK (*bursting out with indignation*)

You are afraid of Man! . . . Even those

unprotected and unarmed little children inspire you with the mysterious terror which has always made us the slaves that we are! . . . Enough of this! Things being as they are and the opportunity unequalled, I shall go forth alone, old, crippled, trembling, blind as I am, against the hereditary enemy! . . . Where is he? . . .

(*Groping with his stick, he moves towards* TYLTYL.)

TYLTYL (*taking his knife from his pocket*) Is it me he's after, that old one, with his big stick? . . .

ALL THE TREES (*uttering a cry of alarm at the sight of the knife, they step in between and hold back the* OAK) The knife! . . . Take care! . . . The knife! . . .

THE OAK (*struggling*) Let me be! . . . What does it matter? . . . The knife or the axe! . . . Who's holding me back? . . . What! Are you all here? . . . What! You all want to. . . . (*Flinging down his*

stick) Well, so be it! . . . Shame upon us! . . . Let the Animals deliver us! . . .

THE BULL

That's right! . . . I'll see to it! . . . And with one blow of the horns! . . .

THE OX *and* THE COW (*holding him back by the tail*)

What are you doing? . . . Don't be a fool! . . . It's a bad business! . . . It will end badly. . . . It is we who will pay for it. . . . Do let be. . . . It's the wild animals' business. . . .

THE BULL

No, no! . . . It's my business! . . . Wait and see! . . . Look here, hold me back or there will be an accident! . . .

TYLTYL (*to* MYTYL, *who is uttering piercing screams*)

Don't be afraid! . . . Stand behind me. . . . I have my knife. . . .

THE COCK

He has plenty of pluck, the little chap! . . .

TYLTYL

So you've made up your minds, it's me you're going for? . . .

THE ASS

Why, of course, my little man; you've taken long enough to see it! . . .

THE PIG

You can say your prayers; your last hour has come. . . . But don't hide the little girl. . . . I want to feast my eyes on her. . . . I'm going to eat her first. . . .

TYLTYL

What have I done to you? . . .

THE SHEEP

Nothing at all, my little man. . . . Eaten my little brother, my two sisters, my three uncles, my aunt, my grandpapa and my grandmamma. . . . Wait, wait, when you're down, you shall see that I have teeth also. . . .

THE ASS

And I hoofs! . . .

THE HORSE (*haughtily pawing the ground*)

You shall see what you shall see! . . . Would you rather that I tore you with my teeth or knocked you down with a kick? . . . (*He moves ostentatiously towards* TYLTYL, *who faces him and raises his knife. Suddenly the* HORSE, *seized with panic, turns and rushes away.*) Ah, no! . . . That's not fair! . . . That's against the rules! . . . He's defending himself! . . .

THE COCK (*unable to hide his admiration*)

I don't care, the little chap's full of grit! . . .

THE PIG (*to the* BEAR *and the* WOLF)

Let us all rush on them together. . . . I will support you from the rear. . . . We will throw them down and share the little girl when she is on the ground. . . .

THE WOLF

Divert their attention in front. . . . I am going to make a turning movement. . . .

(*He goes round* TYLTYL, *whom he attacks from behind and half overthrows.*)

TYLTYL

You brute! . . . (*He raises himself on one knee brandishing his knife and doing his best to cover his little sister, who utters yells of distress. Seeing him half overturned, all the* ANIMALS *and* TREES *come up and try to hit him.* TYLTYL *calls distractedly for assistance.*) Help! Help! . . . Tylô! Tylô! . . . Where is the Cat? . . . Tylô! . . . Tylette! Tylette! . . . Come! Come! . . .

THE CAT (*hypocritically, holding aloof*)

I can't come. . . . I have sprained my paw. . . .

TYLTYL (*warding off the blows and defending himself as best he can*)

Help! . . . Tylô! Tylô! . . . I can't hold out! . . . There are too many of them! . . . The Bear! The Pig! The Donkey! The Ass! The Fir-tree! The Beech! . . . Tylô! Tylô! Tylô! . . .

(*Dragging his broken bonds*

after him, the Dog *leaps from behind the trunk of the* Oak *and, elbowing his way through* Trees *and* Animals, *flings himself before* Tyltyl, *whom he defends furiously.*)

The Dog (*distributing great bites*)

Here! Here, my little god! . . . Don't be afraid! Have at them! . . . I know how to use my teeth! . . . Here, there's one for you, Bear, in your fat hams! . . . Now then, who wants some more? . . . Here, that's for the Pig and that's for the Horse and that's for the Bull's tail! . . . There, I've torn the Beech's trousers and the Oak's petticoat! . . . The Fir-tree's making tracks! . . . Whew, it's warm work! . . .

Tyltyl (*overcome*)

I'm done for! . . . The Cypress has caught me a great blow on the head.. . .

THE DOG

Ow! . . . That's the Willow! . . . He's broken my paw! . . .

TYLTYL

They're coming back, they're charging down upon us, all together! . . . This time, it's the Wolf! . . .

THE DOG

Wait till I give him one for himself! . . .

THE WOLF

Fool! . . . Our brother! . . . His father drowned your seven puppies! . . .

THE DOG

Quite right! . . . And a good thing too! . . . It was because they looked like you! . . .

ALL THE TREES AND ANIMALS

Renegade! . . . Idiot! . . . Traitor! . . . Felon! . . . Simpleton! . . . Judas! . . . Leave him! . . . He's a dead man! . . . Come over to us! . . .

THE DOG (*drunk with ardour and devotion*)

Never! Never! . . . I alone against all of you! . . . Never! Never! . . .

True to the gods, to the best, to the greatest! . . . (*To* TYLTYL) Take care, here's the Bear! . . . Beware of the Bull! . . . I'll jump at his throat. . . . Ow! . . . That's a kick. . . . The Ass has broken two of my teeth. . . .

TYLTYL

I'm done for, Tylô! . . . Ah! . . . That was a blow from the Elm. . . . Look, my hand's bleeding. . . . That's the Wolf or the Pig. . . .

THE DOG

Wait, my little god. . . . Let me kiss you. . . . There, a good lick. . . . That will do you good. . . . Keep behind me. . . . They dare not come again. . . . Yes, though. . . . Here they are coming back! . . . This time, it's serious! . . . We must stand firm! . . .

TYLTYL (*dropping to the ground*)

No, I can hold out no longer! . . .

THE DOG (*listening*)

They are coming! . . . I hear them, I scent them! . . .

TYLTYL

Where? . . . Who? . . .

THE DOG

There! There! . . . It's Light! . . . She has found us! . . . Saved, my little king! . . . Kiss me! . . . We are saved! . . . Look! . . . They're alarmed! . . . They're retreating! . . . They're afraid! . . .

TYLTYL

Light! . . . Light! . . . Come quick! . . . Hurry! . . . They have rebelled! . . . They are all against us! . . .

Enter LIGHT. *As she comes forward, the dawn rises over the forest, which becomes light.*

LIGHT

What is it? . . . What has happened? . . . But, my poor boy, didn't you know? . . . Turn the diamond! . . . They will return into silence and obscurity; and you will no longer perceive their hidden feelings. . . .

(TYLTYL *turns the diamond. Immediately, the souls of all the* TREES *rush back into the trunks, which close again. The souls of the* ANIMALS *also disappear; and a peaceful* COW *and* SHEEP, *etc., are seen browsing in the distance. The Forest becomes harmless once more.* TYLTYL *looks around him in amazement.*)

TYLTYL

Where are they? . . . What was the matter with them? . . . Were they mad? . . .

LIGHT

No, they are always like that; but we do not know it because we do not see it. . . . I told you so before; it is dangerous to wake them when I am not there. . . .

TYLTYL (*wiping his knife*)

Well, but for the Dog and if I had not had my knife! . . . I would never have believed that they were so wicked! . . .

LIGHT

You see that Man is all alone against all in this world. . . .

THE DOG

Are you very badly hurt, my little god? . . .

TYLTYL

Nothing serious. . . . As for Mytyl, they have not touched her. . . . But you, my dear Tylô? . . . Your mouth is all over blood and your paw is broken! . . .

THE DOG

It is not worth speaking of. . . . It won't show to-morrow. . . . But it was a tough fight! . . .

THE CAT (*appearing from behind a thicket, limping*)

I should think so! . . . The Ox caught me a blow with his horns in the stomach. . . . You can't see the marks, but it's very painful. . . . And the Oak broke my paw. . . .

THE DOG

I should like to know which one. . . .

MYTYL (*stroking the* CAT)

My poor Tylette, did he really? . . . Where were you? . . . I did not see you. . . .

THE CAT (*hypocritically*)

Mummy dear, I was wounded at the first, while attacking that horrid Pig, who wanted to eat you. . . . And then the Oak gave me a great blow which struck me senseless. . . .

THE DOG (*to the* CAT, *between his teeth*)

As for you, I want a word with you presently. . . . It will keep! . . .

THE CAT (*plaintively, to* MYTYL)

Mummy dear, he's insulting me. . . . He wants to hurt me. . . .

MYTYL (*to the* DOG)

Leave him alone, will you, you ugly beast? . . .

(*They all go out.*)

CURTAIN

Act IV

Scene 1.—*Before the Curtain.*

Enter Tyltyl, Mytyl, Light, *the* Dog, *the* Cat, Bread, Fire, Sugar, Water *and* Milk.

Light

I have received a note from the Fairy Bérylune telling me that the Blue Bird is probably here.

Tyltyl

Where? . . .

Light

Here, in the graveyard behind that wall. . . . It appears that one of the dead in the graveyard is hiding it in his tomb. . . . We must find out which one it is. . . . We shall have to pass them under review. . . .

Tyltyl

Under review? . . . How is that done? . . .

Light

It is very simple: at midnight, so as not to

disturb them too greatly, you will turn the diamond. We shall see them come out of the ground; or else we shall see those who do not come out lying in their tombs. . . .

TYLTYL

Will they not be angry? . . .

LIGHT

Not at all; they will not even know. . . . They do not like being disturbed, but, as it is their custom, in any case, to come out at midnight, that will not inconvenience them. . . .

TYLTYL

Why are Bread, Sugar and Milk so pale and why do they say nothing? . . .

MILK (*staggering*)

I feel I am going to turn. . . .

LIGHT (*aside to* TYLTYL)

Do not mind them. . . . They are afraid of the dead. . . .

FIRE (*frisking about*)

I'm not afraid of them! . . . I am used to burning them. . . . Time was when I

burnt them all; that was much more amusing than nowadays. . . .

TYLTYL

And why is Tylô trembling? . . . Is he afraid, too? . . .

THE DOG

I? . . . I'm not trembling! . . . I am never afraid; but if you went away, I should go too. . . .

TYLTYL

And has the Cat nothing to say? . . .

THE CAT (*mysteriously*)

I know what's what. . . .

TYLTYL (*to* LIGHT)

Are you coming with us? . . .

LIGHT

No; it is better that I should remain at the gate of the graveyard with the Things and the Animals. . . . Some of them would be too frightened and I fear that the others would misbehave. . . . Fire, in particular, would want to burn the dead, as of old; and that is no longer done. . . . I shall leave you alone with Mytyl. . . .

TYLTYL

And may not Tylô stay with us? . . .

THE DOG

Yes, yes, I shall stay; I shall stay here! . . . I want to stay with my little god! . . .

LIGHT

It is impossible. . . . The Fairy gave formal orders; besides, there is nothing to fear. . . .

THE DOG

Very well, very well, it makes no difference. If they are vicious, my little god, all you have to do is this . . . (*he whistles*) and you shall see. . . . It will be just as in the forest: Wow! Wow! Wow! . . .

LIGHT

Come, good-bye, dear children. . . . I shall not be far away. . . . (*She kisses the* CHILDREN.) Those who love me and whom I love always find me again. . . . (*To the* THINGS *and the* ANIMALS) This way, all of you. . . .

(*She goes out with the* THINGS *and the* ANIMALS. *The*

CHILDREN *remain alone in the middle of the stage. The curtain opens and discloses the next scene.*)

SCENE 2.—*The Graveyard.*

It is night. The moon is shining on a country graveyard.. Numerous tombstones, grassy mounds, wooden crosses, stone slabs, etc. TYLTYL *and* MYTYL *are standing by a short stone pillar.*

MYTYL

I am frightened! . . .

TYLTYL (*not too much at his ease*)

I am never frightened. . . .

MYTYL

I say, are the dead wicked? . . .

TYLTYL

Why, no, they're not alive! . . .

MYTYL

Have you ever seen one? . . .

TYLTYL

Yes, once, long ago, when I was very young. . . .

MYTYL

What was it like, say? . . .

TYLTYL

Quite white, very still and very cold and it didn't talk. . . .

MYTYL

Are we going to see them, say? . . .

TYLTYL

Why, of course, Light said so. . . .

MYTYL

Where are they? . . .

TYLTYL

Here, under the grass or under those big stones. . . .

MYTYL

Are they there all the year round? . . .

TYLTYL

Yes.

MYTYL (*pointing to the slabs*)

Are those the doors of their houses? . . .

TYLTYL

Yes.

MYTYL

Do they go out when it's fine? . . .

TYLTYL

They can only go out at night. . . .

MYTYL

Why? . . . .

TYLTYL

Because they are in their shirts. . . .

MYTYL

Do they go out also when it rains? . . .

TYLTYL

When it rains, they stay at home. . . . .

MYTYL

Is it nice in their homes, say? . . .

TYLTYL

They say it's very cramped. . . .

MYTYL

Have they any little children? . . .

TYLTYL

Why, yes; they have all those that die. . . .

MYTYL

And what do they live on? . . . .

TYLTYL

They eat roots. . . .

MYTYL

Shall we see them? . . . .

TYLTYL

Of course; we see everything when I turn the diamond.

MYTYL

And what will they say? . . .

TYLTYL

They will say nothing, as they don't talk. . . .

MYTYL

Why don't they talk? . . .

TYLTYL

Because they have nothing to say. . . .

MYTYL

Why have they nothing to say? . . .

TYLTYL

You're a nuisance. . . .

(*A pause*)

MYTYL

When will you turn the diamond?

TYLTYL

You heard Light say that I was to wait until midnight, because that disturbs them less. . . .

MYTYL

Why does that disturb them less? . . .

TYLTYL

Because that is when they go out to take the air. . . .

MYTYL

Is it not midnight yet? . . .

TYLTYL

Do you see the church clock? . . .

MYTYL

Yes, I can even see the small hand. . . .

TYLTYL

Well, midnight is just going to strike. . . . There! . . . Do you hear? . . .

(*The clock strikes twelve*)

MYTYL

I want to go away! . . .

TYLTYL

Not now. . . . I am going to turn the diamond. . . .

MYTYL

No, no! . . . Don't! . . . I want to go away! . . . I am so frightened, little brother! . . . I am terribly frightened! . . .

TYLTYL

But there is no danger. . . .

MYTYL

I don't want to see the dead! . . . I don't want to see them! . . .

TYLTYL

Very well, you shall not see them; shut your eyes. . . .

MYTYL (*clinging to* TYLTYL's *clothes*)

Tyltyl, I can't stay! . . . No, I can't possibly! . . . They are going to come out of the ground! . . .

TYLTYL

Don't tremble like that. . . . They will only come out for a moment. . . .

MYTYL

But you're trembling, too! . . . They will be awful! . . .

TYLTYL

It is time, the hour is passing. . . .

(TYLTYL *turns the diamond. A terrifying minute of silence and motionlessness elapses, after which, slowly, the crosses totter, the mounds open, the slabs rise up. . . .*)

MYTYL (*cowering against* TYLTYL)
They are coming out! . . . They are there! . . .

(*Then, from all the gaping tombs, there rises gradually an efflorescence at first frail and timid, like steam; then white and virginal and more and more tufty, more and more tall and plentiful and marvellous. Little by little, irresistibly, invading all things, it transforms the graveyard into a sort of fairy-like and nuptial garden, over which rise the first rays of the dawn. The dew glitters, the flowers open their blooms, the wind murmurs in the leaves, the bees hum, the birds wake and flood the air with the first raptures of their hymns to the sun and to life. Stunned and dazzled,* TYLTYL *and*

holding each other by the hand, take a few steps among the flowers while they seek for the trace of the tombs.)

MYTYL (*looking in the grass*)
Where are the dead? . . .

TYLTYL (*looking also*)
There are no dead. . . .

CURTAIN

SCENE 3.—*The Kingdom of the Future.*

The immense halls of the Azure Palace, where the children wait that are yet to be born. Infinite perspectives of sapphire columns supporting turquoise vaults. Everything, from the light and the lapis-lazuli flagstones to the shimmering background into which the last arches run and disappear, everything, down to the smallest objects, is of an unreal, intense, fairy-like blue. Only the plinths and capitals of the columns, the key-stones, a few seats

and circular benches are of white marble or alabaster. To the right, between the columns, are great opalescent doors. These doors, which TIME *will throw back towards the end of the scene, open upon actual life and the quays of the Dawn. Everywhere, harmoniously peopling the hall, is a crowd of* CHILDREN *robed in long azure garments. Some are playing, others strolling to and fro, others talking or dreaming; many are asleep, many also are working, between the colonnades, at future inventions; and their tools, their instruments, the apparatus which they are constructing, the plants, flowers and fruit which they are cultivating or plucking are of the same supernatural and luminous blue as the general atmosphere of the Palace. Figures of a taller stature, clad in a paler and more diaphanous azure, figures of a sovereign and silent beauty move among the* CHILDREN *and would seem to be angels.*

Enter on the left, as though by stealth, gliding between the columns in the foreground, TYLTYL, MYTYL *and* LIGHT. *Their arrival causes a certain movement among the* BLUE CHILDREN, *who come running up on every hand, form a group around the unwonted visitors and gaze upon them with curiosity.*

MYTYL

Where are Sugar, the Cat and Bread? . . .

LIGHT

They cannot enter here; they would know the future and would not obey. . . .

TYLTYL

And the Dog? . . .

LIGHT

It is not well, either, that he should know what awaits him in the course of the ages. . . . I have locked them all up in the vaults of the church. . . .

TYLTYL

Where are we? . . .

LIGHT

We are in the Kingdom of the Future, in

the midst of the children who are not yet born. As the diamond allows us to see clearly in this region which is hidden from men, we shall very probably find the Blue Bird here. . . .

TYLTYL

Certainly the bird will be blue, since everything here is blue. . . . (*Looking all around him.*) Heaven, how beautiful it all is! . . .

LIGHT

Look at the children running up. . . .

TYLTYL

Are they angry? . . .

LIGHT

Not at all. . . . You can see, they are smiling, but they are surprised. . . .

THE BLUE CHILDREN (*running up in ever-increasing numbers*)

Live children! . . . Come and look at the little live children! . . .

TYLTYL

Why do they call us the little live children?

LIGHT

Because they themselves are not alive yet. . . .

TYLTYL

What are they doing, then? . . .

LIGHT

They are awaiting the hour of their birth. . . .

TYLTYL

The hour of their birth? . . .

LIGHT

Yes; it is from here that all the children come who are born upon our earth. Each awaits his day. . . . When the fathers and mothers want children, the great doors which you see there, on the right, are opened and the little ones go down. . . .

TYLTYL

What a lot there are! What a lot there are! . . .

LIGHT

There are many more. . . . We do not see them all. . . . There are thirty thousand halls like this, all full of

them. . . . Just think, there are enough to last to the end of the world! . . . No one could count them. . . .

TYLTYL

And those tall blue persons, who are they? . . .

LIGHT

No one exactly knows. . . . They are believed to be guardians. . . . I have heard that they will come upon earth after men. . . . But we are not allowed to ask them. . . .

TYLTYL

Why not? . . .

LIGHT

Because it is the earth's secret. . . .

TYLTYL

And may one talk to the others, the little ones? . . .

LIGHT

Certainly; you must make friends. . . . Look, there is one who is more curious than the rest. . . . Go up to him, speak to him. . . .

TYLTYL

What shall I say to him? . . .

LIGHT

Whatever you like, as you would to a little playfellow. . . .

TYLTYL

Can I shake hands with him? . . .

LIGHT

Of course, he won't hurt you. . . . But come, don't look so constrained. . . . I will leave you alone, you will be more at ease by yourselves. . . . Besides, I want to speak to the tall blue person. . . .

TYLTYL (*going up to the* BLUE CHILD *and holding out his hand*)

How do you do? . . . (*Touching the* CHILD'S *blue dress with his finger.*) What's that? . . .

THE CHILD (*gravely touching* TYLTYL'S *hat*)

And that? . . .

TYLTYL

That? . . . That is my hat. . . . Have you no hat? . . .

THE CHILD

No; what is it for? . . .

TYLTYL

It's to say How-do-you-do with. . . . And then for when it rains or when it's cold. . . .

THE CHILD

What does that mean, when it's cold? . . .

TYLTYL

When you shiver like this: brrrr! brrrr! . . . When you blow into your hands and go like this with your arms. . . . (*He vigorously beats his arms across his chest.*)

THE CHILD

Is it cold on earth? . . .

TYLTYL

Yes, sometimes, in the winter, when there is no fire. . . .

THE CHILD

Why is there no fire? . . .

TYLTYL

Because it's expensive and it costs money to buy wood. . . .

THE CHILD

What is money? . . .

TYLTYL

It's what you pay with. . . .

THE CHILD

Oh. . . .

TYLTYL

Some people have money and others have none. . . .

THE CHILD

Why not? . . .

TYLTYL

Because they are not rich. . . . Are you rich? . . . How old are you? . . .

THE CHILD

I am going to be born soon. . . . I shall be born in twelve years. . . . Is it nice to be born? . . .

TYLTYL

Oh, yes! . . . It's great fun! . . .

THE CHILD

How did you manage? . . .

TYLTYL

I can't remember. . . . It is so long ago! . . .

THE CHILD

They say it's lovely, the earth and the live people! . . .

TYLTYL

Yes, it's not bad. . . . There are birds and cakes and toys. . . . Some have them all; but those who have none can look at them. . . .

THE CHILD

They tell us that the mothers stand waiting at the door. . . . They are good, aren't they? . . .

TYLTYL

Oh, yes! . . . They are better than anything in the world! . . . And the grannies too; but they die too soon. . . .

THE CHILD

They die? . . . What is that? . . .

TYLTYL

They go away one evening and do not come back. . . .

THE CHILD

Why? . . .

TYLTYL

How can one tell? . . . Perhaps because they feel sad. . . .

THE CHILD

Has yours gone? . . .

TYLTYL

My grandmamma? . . .

THE CHILD

Your mamma or your grandmamma, I don't know. . . .

TYLTYL

Oh, but it's not the same thing! . . . The grannies go first; that's sad enough. . . . Mine was very kind to me. . . .

THE CHILD

What is the matter with your eyes? . . . Are they making pearls? . . .

TYLTYL

No; it's not pearls. . . .

THE CHILD

What is it, then? . . .

TYLTYL

It's nothing; it's all that blue, which dazzles me a little. . . .

THE CHILD

What is that called? . . .

TYLTYL

What? . . .

THE CHILD

There, that, falling down. . . .

TYLTYL

Nothing, it is a little water. . . .

THE CHILD

Does it come from the eyes? . . .

TYLTYL

Yes, sometimes, when one cries. . . .

THE CHILD

What does that mean, crying? . . .

TYLTYL

I have not been crying; it is the fault of that blue. . . But if I had cried, it would be the same thing. . . .

THE CHILD

Does one often cry? . . .

TYLTYL

Not little boys, but little girls do. . . . Don't you cry here? . . .

THE CHILD

No; I don't know how. . . .

TYLTYL

Well, you will learn. . . . What are you playing with, those great blue wings? . . .

THE CHILD

These? . . . That's for the invention which I shall make on earth. . . .

TYLTYL

What invention? . . . Have you invented something? . . .

THE CHILD

Why, yes; haven't you heard? . . . When I am on earth, I shall have to invent the thing that gives happiness. . . .

TYLTYL

Is it good to eat? . . . Does it make a noise? . . .

THE CHILD

No; you hear nothing. . . .

TYLTYL

That's a pity. . . .

THE CHILD

I work at it every day. . . . It is almost finished. . . . Would you like to see it? . . .

TYLTYL

Very much. . . . Where is it? . . .

THE CHILD

There, you can see it from here, between those two columns. . . .

ANOTHER BLUE CHILD (*coming up to* TYLTYL *and plucking his sleeve*)

Would you like to see mine, say? . . .

TYLTYL

Yes, what is it? . . .

THE SECOND CHILD

The thirty-three remedies for prolonging life. . . . There, in those blue phials. . . .

A THIRD CHILD (*stepping out from the crowd*)

I will show you a light which nobody knows of! . . . (*He lights himself up entirely with an extraordinary flame.*) It's rather curious, isn't it? . . .

A FOURTH CHILD (*pulling* TYLTYL'S *arm*)

Do come and look at my machine which

flies in the air like a bird without wings! . . .

A Fifth Child

No, no; mine first! It discovers the treasures hidden in the moon! . . .

The Blue Children (*crowding round* Tyltyl *and* Mytyl *and all crying together*)

No, no, come and see mine! . . . No, mine is much finer! . . . Mine is a wonderful invention! . . . Mine is made of sugar! . . . His is no good! . . . He stole the idea from me! . . .

(*Amid these disordered exclamations, the* Live Children *are dragged towards the blue workshops, where each of the inventors sets his ideal machine going. There ensues a cerulean whirl of wheels, disks, fly-wheels, driving-wheels, pulleys, straps and strange and as yet unnamed objects shrouded in the bluey mists*

of the unreal. A crowd of odd and mysterious mechanisms dart forth and hover under the vaults or crawl at the foot of the columns, while CHILDREN *unfold charts and plans, open books, uncover azure statues and bring enormous flowers and gigantic fruits that seem formed of sapphires and turquoises.*)

A LITTLE BLUE CHILD (*bending under the weight of some colossal blue daisies*)

Look at my flowers! . . .

TYLTYL

What are they? . . . I don't know them. . . .

THE LITTLE BLUE CHILD

They are daisies! . . .

TYLTYL

Impossible! . . . They are as big as tables! . . .

THE LITTLE BLUE CHILD

And they smell so good! . . .

TYLTYL (*smelling them*)

Wonderful! . . .

THE LITTLE BLUE CHILD

They will grow like that when I am on earth. . . .

TYLTYL

When will that be? . . .

THE LITTLE BLUE CHILD

In fifty-three years, four months and nine days. . . .

(*Two* BLUE CHILDREN *arrive, carrying, like a lustre hanging on a pole, an incredible bunch of grapes, each larger than a pear.*)

ONE OF THE CHILDREN (*carrying the grapes*)

What do you say to my fruits? . . .

TYLTYL

A bunch of pears! . . .

THE CHILD

No, they are grapes! . . . They will all

be like that when I am thirty. . . . I have found the way. . . .

ANOTHER CHILD (*staggering under a basket of blue apples the size of melons*)

And mine! . . . Look at my apples! . . .

TYLTYL

But those are melons! . . .

THE CHILD

No, no! . . . They are my apples and they are not the finest at that! . . . They will all be alike when I am alive. . . . I have discovered the system! . . .

ANOTHER CHILD (*wheeling a blue barrow with blue melons bigger than pumpkins*)

What do you say to my little melons? . . .

TYLTYL

But they are pumpkins! . . .

THE CHILD WITH THE MELONS

When I come on earth, the melons will be splendid! . . . I shall be the gardener of the King of the Three Planets. . . .

TYLTYL

The King of the Three Planets?

THE CHILD WITH THE MELONS

The great king who for thirty-five years will bring happiness to the Earth, Mars and the Moon. . . . You can see him from here. . . .

TYLTYL

Where is he? . . .

THE CHILD WITH THE MELONS

There, the little boy sleeping at the foot of that column.

TYLTYL

On the left? . . .

THE CHILD WITH THE MELONS

No, on the right. . . . The one on the left is the child who will bring pure joy to the globe. . . .

TYLTYL

How? . . .

THE CHILD (*the one that first talked to* TYLTYL)

By means of ideas which people have not yet had. . . .

TYLTYL

And the other, that little fat one with his fingers to his nose, what will he do? . . .

THE CHILD

He is to discover the fire that will warm the earth when the sun is paler than now. . . .

TYLTYL

And the two holding each other by the hand and always kissing; are they brother and sister? . . .

THE CHILD

No; they are very comical. . . . They are the Lovers. . . .

TYLTYL

What is that? . . .

THE CHILD

I don't know. . . . Time calls them that, to make fun of them. . . . They spend the day looking into each other's eyes, kissing and bidding each other farewell. . . .

TYLTYL

Why? . . .

THE CHILD

It seems that they will not be able to leave together. . . .

TYLTYL

And the little pink one, who looks so serious and is sucking his thumb, what is he? . . .

THE CHILD

It appears that he is to wipe out injustice from the earth. . . .

TYLTYL

Oh! . . .

THE CHILD

They say it's a tremendous work. . . .

TYLTYL

And the little red-haired one, who walks as if he did not see where he was going, is he blind? . . .

THE CHILD

Not yet; but he will become so. . . . Look at him well; it seems that he is to conquer Death. . . .

TYLTYL

What does that mean? . . .

THE CHILD

I don't exactly know; but they say it's a great thing. . . .

TYLTYL (*pointing to a crowd of* CHILDREN *sleeping at the foot of the columns, on the steps, the benches, etc.*)

And all those asleep, what a number of them there are asleep! . . . Do they do nothing? . . .

THE CHILD

They are thinking of something. . . .

TYLTYL

Of what? . . .

THE CHILD

They do not know yet; but they must take something with them to earth; we are not allowed to go from here empty-handed. . . .

TYLTYL

Who says so? . . .

THE CHILD

Time, who stands at the door. . . . You will see when he opens it. . . . He is very tiresome. . . .

A CHILD (*running up from the back of the hall and elbowing his way through the crowd*)

How are you, TYLTYL? . . .

TYLTYL

Hullo! . . . How does he know my name? . . .

THE CHILD (*who has just run up and who now kisses* TYLTYL *and* MYTYL *effusively.*)

How are you? . . . All right? . . . Come, give me a kiss, and you too, Mytyl. It's not surprising that I should know your name, seeing that I shall be your brother. . . . They have only just told me that you were here. . . . I was right at the other end of the hall, packing up my ideas. . . . Tell mummy that I am ready. . . .

TYLTYL

What? . . . Are you coming to us? . . .

THE CHILD

Certainly, next year, on Palm Sunday. . . . Don't tease me too much when I am little. . . . I am very glad to have

kissed you both beforehand. . . .
Tell daddy to mend the cradle. . . .
Is it comfortable in our home? . . .

TYLTYL

Not bad. . . . And mummy is so kind! . . .

THE CHILD

And the food? . . .

TYLTYL

That depends. . . . We even have cakes sometimes, don't we, Mytyl? . . .

MYTYL

On New Year's Day and the fourteenth of July. . . . Mummy makes them. . . .

TYLTYL

What have you got in that bag? . . . Are you bringing us something? . . .

THE CHILD

I am bringing three illnesses: scarlatina, whooping-cough and measles. . . .

TYLTYL

Oh, that's all, is it? . . . And, after that, what will you do? . . .

THE CHILD

After that? . . . I shall leave you. . . .

TYLTYL

It will hardly be worth while coming! . . .

THE CHILD

We can't pick and choose! . . .

(*At that moment, a sort of prolonged, powerful, crystalline vibration is heard to rise and swell; it seems to emanate from the columns and the opal doors, which are irradiated by a brighter light than before.*)

TYLTYL

What is that? . . .

THE CHILD

That's Time! . . . He is going to open the gates! . . .

(*A great change comes over the crowd of* BLUE CHILDREN. *Most of them leave their machines and their labours, numbers of sleepers awake and all turn their eyes towards the opal doors and go nearer to them.*)

LIGHT (*joining* TYLTYL)

Let us try to hide behind the columns. . . . It will not do for Time to discover us. . . .

TYLTYL

Where does that noise come from? . . .

A CHILD

It is the Dawn rising. . . . This is the hour when the children who are to be born to-day go down to earth. . . .

TYLTYL

How will they go down? . . . Are there ladders? . . .

THE CHILD

You shall see. . . . Time is drawing the bolts. . . .

TYLTYL

Who is Time? . . .

THE CHILD

An old man who comes to call those who are going. . . .

TYLTYL

Is he wicked? . . .

THE CHILD

No; but he hears nothing. . . . Beg as

they may, if it's not their turn, he pushes back all those who try to go. . . .

TYLTYL

Are they glad to go? . . .

THE CHILD

We are sorry when we are left behind, but we are sad when we go. . . . There! There! . . . He is opening the doors! . . .

(*The great opalescent doors turn slowly on their hinges. The sounds of the earth are heard like a distant music. A red and green light penetrates into the hall;* TIME, *a tall old man with a streaming beard, armed with his scythe and hour-glass, appears upon the threshold; and the spectator perceives the extremity of the white and gold sails of a galley moored to a sort of*

quay, formed by the rosy mists of the Dawn.)

TIME (*on the threshold*)

Are they ready whose hour has struck?...

BLUE CHILDREN (*elbowing their way and running up from all sides*)

Here we are! . . . Here we are! . . . Here we are! . . .

TIME (*in a gruff voice to the* CHILDREN *defiling before him to go out*)

One at a time! . . . Once again, there are many more of you than are wanted! . . . It's always the same thing! . . . You can't deceive me! . . . (*Pushing back a* CHILD.) It's not your turn! . . . Go back and wait till to-morrow. . . . Nor you either; go in and return in ten years. . . . A thirteenth shepherd? . . . There are only twelve wanted; there is no need for more; the days of Theocritus and Virgil are past. . . . More doctors? . . . There are too many already; they are grumbling about it on earth. . . . And where are the engineers? . . . They want an

honest man, only one, as a phenomenon. . . . Where is the honest man? . . . Is it you? . . . (THE CHILD *nods yes.*) You appear to me to be a very poor specimen! . . . Hallo, you, over there, not so fast, not so fast! . . . And you, what are you bringing? . . . Nothing at all, empty-handed? . . . Then you can't go through. . . . Prepare something, a great crime, if you like, or a fine sickness, I don't care . . . but you must have something. . . . (*Catching sight of a little* CHILD *whom the others are pushing forward, while he resists with all his strength.*) Well, what's the matter with you? . . . You know that the hour has come. . . . They want a hero to fight against injustice; you're the one; you must start. . . .

THE BLUE CHILDREN

He doesn't want to, sir. . . .

TIME

What? . . . He doesn't want to? . . . Where does the little monster think he

is? . . . No objections, we have no time to spare. . . .

THE CHILD (*who is being pushed*)

No, no! . . . I don't want to go! . . . I would rather not be born! . . . I would rather stay here! . . .

TIME

That is not the question. . . . When the hour comes, it comes! . . . Now then, quick, forward! . . .

A CHILD (*stepping forward*)

Oh, let me pass! . . . I will go and take his place! . . . They say that my parents are old and have been waiting for me so long! . . .

TIME

None of that! . . . You will start at your proper hour, at your proper time. . . . We should never be done if we listened to you. . . . One wants to go, another refuses; it's too soon or it's too late. . . . (*Pushing back some* CHILDREN *who have encroached upon the threshold.*) Not so near, you children! . . . Back, you inquisitive ones!

. . . Those who are not starting have no business outside. . . . You are in a hurry now; later, when your turn comes, you will be frightened and hang back. . . . Look, there are four who are trembling like leaves. . . . (*To a* CHILD *who, on the point of crossing the threshold, suddenly goes back.*) Well, what is it? . . . What's the matter? . . .

THE CHILD

I have forgotten the box containing the two crimes which I shall have to commit. . . .

ANOTHER CHILD

And I the little pot with my idea for enlightening the crowd. . . .

A THIRD CHILD

I have forgotten the graft of my finest pear! . . .

TIME

Run quick and fetch them! . . . We have only six hundred and twelve seconds left. . . . The galley of the Dawn is already flapping her sails to show that

she is waiting. . . . You will come too late and you won't be born! . . . Come, quick, on board with you! . . . (*Laying hold of a* CHILD *who tries to pass between his legs to reach the quay.*) Oh, no, not you! . . . This is the third time you've tried to be born before your turn. . . . Don't let me catch you at it again, or you can wait forever with my sister Eternity; and you know that it's not amusing there! . . . But come, are we ready? . . . Is every one at his post? . . . (*Surveying the* CHILDREN *standing on the quay or already seated in the galley.*) There is still one missing. . . . It is no use his hiding, I see him in the crowd. . . . You can't deceive me! . . . Come on, you, the little fellow whom they call the Lover, say good-bye to your sweetheart. . . .

(*The two* CHILDREN *who are called the Lovers, fondly entwined, their faces livid*

with despair, go up to TIME
and kneel at his feet.)

THE FIRST CHILD

Mr. Time, let me stay behind with her! . . .

THE SECOND CHILD

Mr. Time, let me go with him! . . .

TIME

Impossible! . . . We have only three hundred and ninety-four seconds left. . . .

THE FIRST CHILD

I would rather not be born! . . .

TIME

You cannot choose. . . . .

THE SECOND CHILD (*beseechingly*)

Mr. Time, I shall come too late! . . .

THE FIRST CHILD

I shall be gone before she comes down! . . .

THE SECOND CHILD

I shall never see him again! . . .

THE FIRST CHILD

We shall be alone in the world! . . .

TIME

All this does not concern me. . . . Address your entreaties to Life. . . . I unite

and part as I am told. . . . (*Seizing one of the* CHILDREN.) Come! . . .

THE FIRST CHILD (*struggling*)

No, no, no! . . . She, too! . . .

THE SECOND CHILD (*clinging to the clothes of the* FIRST)

Leave him with me! . . . Leave him! . . .

TIME

Come, come, he is not going to die, but to live! . . . (*Dragging away the* FIRST CHILD.) Come along! . . .

THE SECOND CHILD (*stretching her arms out frantically to the* CHILD *that is being carried off*)

A sign! . . . A sign! . . . Tell me how to find you! . . .

THE FIRST CHILD

I shall always love you! . . .

THE SECOND CHILD

I shall be the saddest thing on earth! . . . You will know me by that! . . . (*She falls and remains stretched on the ground.*)

TIME

You would do much better to hope. . . .

And now, that is all. . . . (*Consulting his hour-glass.*) We have only sixty-three seconds left. . . .

(*Last and violent movements among the* CHILDREN *departing and remaining. They exchange hurried farewells.*)

THE BLUE CHILDREN

Good-bye, Pierre! . . . Good-bye, Jean! . . . Have you all you want? . . . Announce my idea! . . . Have you got the new turnscrew? . . . Mind you speak of my melons! . . . Have you forgotten nothing? . . . Try to know me again! . . . I shall find you! . . . Don't lose your ideas! . . . Don't lean too far into space! . . . Send me your news! . . . They say one can't . . . Oh, try, do try! . . . Try to tell us if it's nice! . . . I will come to meet you! . . . I shall be born on a throne! . . .

TIME (*shaking his keys and his scythe*)

Enough! Enough! . . . The anchor's raised! . . .

(*The sails of the galley pass and disappear. The voices of the* CHILDREN *in the galley are heard in the distance:* "The Earth! The Earth! . . . I can see it! . . . How beautiful it is! . . . How bright it is! . . . How big it is!" . . . *Then, as though issuing from the depths of the abyss, an extremely distant song of gladness and expectation.*)

TYLTYL (*to* LIGHT)

What is that? . . . It is not they singing. . . . It sounds like other voices. . . .

LIGHT

Yes, it is the song of the mothers coming out to meet them. . . .

(*Meanwhile,* TIME *closes the opalescent doors. He turns to take a last look at the hall*

and suddenly perceives TYLTYL, MYTYL *and* LIGHT.)

TIME (*dumbfoundered and furious*)

What's that? . . . What are you doing here? . . . Who are you? . . . Why are you not blue? . . . How did you get in? . . . (*He comes forward, threatening them with his scythe.*)

LIGHT (*to* TYLTYL)

Do not answer! . . . I have the Blue Bird. . . . He is hidden under my cloak. . . . Let us escape. . . . Turn the diamond, he will lose our traces. . . .

(*They slip away on the left, between the columns in the foreground.*)

CURTAIN

ACT V.

SCENE 1.—*The Leave-taking.*

The stage represents a wall with a small door. It is the break of day.

(*Enter* TYLTYL, MYTYL, LIGHT, BREAD, WATER, SUGAR, FIRE *and* MILK)

You would never guess where we are. . . .

TYLTYL

Well, no, Light, because I don't know. . . .

LIGHT

Don't you recognise that wall and that little door? . . .

TYLTYL

It is a red wall and a little green door.

LIGHT

And doesn't that remind you of anything? . . .

TYLTYL

It reminds me that Time shewed us the door. . . .

LIGHT

How odd people are when they dream. . . . They do not recognise their own hands. . . .

TYLTYL

Who is dreaming? . . . Am I? . . .

LIGHT

Perhaps it's myself. . . . Who can tell? . . . However, this wall contains a house which you have seen more than once since you were born. . . .

TYLTYL

A house which I have seen more than once since I was born? . . .

LIGHT

Why yes, sleepy-head! . . . It is the house which we left one evening, just a year ago, to a day. . . .

TYLTYL

Just a year ago? . . . Why, then. . . .

LIGHT

Come, come! . . . Don't open great eyes like sapphire caves. . . . It's the dear old house of your father and mother. . . .

TYLTYL (*going up to the door*)

But I think. . . . Yes, really. . . . It seems to me. . . . This little door. . . . I recognise the wooden pin. . . . Are they in there? . . . Are we near mummy? . . . I want to go in at once. . . . I want to kiss her at once! . . .

LIGHT

One moment. . . . They are sound asleep; you must not wake them with a start. . . . Besides, the door will not open till the hour strikes. . . .

TYLTYL

What hour? . . . Is there long to wait? . . .

LIGHT

Alas, no! . . . A few poor minutes. . . .

TYLTYL

Aren't you glad to be back? . . . What is it, Light? . . . You are quite pale, you look ill. . . .

LIGHT

It's nothing, child. . . . I feel a little sad, because I am leaving you. . . .

TYLTYL

Leaving us? . . .

LIGHT

I must. . . . I have nothing more to do here; the year is over, the Fairy is coming back to ask you for the Blue Bird. . . .

TYLTYL

But I haven't got the Blue Bird! . . . The one of the Land of Memory turned quite black, the one of the Future turned quite pink, the Night's are dead and I could not catch the one in the Forest. . . . Is it my fault if they change colour, or die, or escape? . . . Will the Fairy be angry and what will she say? . . .

LIGHT

We have done what we could. . . . It seems likely that the Blue Bird does not exist or that he changes colour when he is caged. . . .

TYLTYL

Where is the cage? . . .

BREAD

Here, master. . . . It was entrusted to my diligent care during our long journey; to-day, now that my mission is drawing to an end, I restore it to your hands, untouched and carefully closed, as I received it. . . . (*Like an orator making a speech*) And now, in the name of all, I crave permission to add a few words. . . .

FIRE

He has not been called upon to speak! . . .

WATER

Order! . . .

BREAD

The malevolent interruptions of a contemptible enemy, of an envious rival. . . .

FIRE

An envious rival! . . . What would you be without me? . . . A lump of shapeless and indigestible dough. . . .

WATER

Order! . . .

FIRE

I won't be shouted down by you! . . .

(*They threaten each other and are about to come to blows.*)

LIGHT (*raising her wand*)

Enough! . . .

BREAD

The insults and the ridiculous pretensions of an element whose notorious misbehaviour and whose scandalous excesses drive the world to despair. . . .

FIRE

You fat pasty-face!

BREAD (*raising his voice*)

Will not prevent me from doing my duty to the end. . . . I wish, therefore, in the name of all . . .

FIRE

Not in mine! . . . I have a tongue of my own! . . .

BREAD

In the name of all and with a restrained but simple and deep emotion, to take leave of two distinguished children, whose exalted mission ends to-day. . . . When bidding them farewell,

with all the grief and all the fondness which a mutual esteem. . . .

TYLTYL

What? . . . You are bidding us farewell? . . . Are you leaving us too? . . .

BREAD

Alas, needs must, since the hour when men's eyes are to be opened has not yet come. . . . I am leaving you, it is true; but the separation will only be apparent, you will no longer hear me speak. . . .

FIRE

That will be no loss! . . .

WATER

Order! Silence! . . .

FIRE

I shall keep silence when you cease babbling in the kettles, the wells, the brooks, the waterfalls and the taps. . . .

LIGHT (*threatening them with her wand*)

That will do, do you hear? . . . You are all very quarrelsome; it is the coming separation that sets your nerves on edge like this. . . .

BREAD (*with great dignity*)

That does not apply to me. . . . I was saying, you will no longer hear me speak, no longer see me in my living form. . . . Your eyes are about to close to the invisible life of the Things; but I shall always be there, in the bread-pan, on the shelf, on the table, beside the soup, I who am, if I may say so, with Water and Fire, the most faithful companion, the oldest friend of Man. . . .

FIRE

Well, and what about me? . . .

LIGHT

Come, the minutes are passing, the hour is at hand which will send us back into silence. . . . Be quick and kiss the children. . . .

FIRE (*rushing forward*)

I first! I first! . . . (*Violently kissing the* CHILDREN.) Good-bye, Tyltyl and Mytyl! . . . Good-bye, my darlings. . . . Think of me if ever you want any one to set fire to anything. . . .

MYTYL

Oh! Oh! . . . He's burning me! . . .

TYLTYL

Oh! Oh! . . . He's scorched my nose! . . .

LIGHT

Come, Fire, moderate your transports. . . . Remember you're not in your chimney. . . .

WATER

What an idiot! . . .

BREAD

What a vulgarian! . . .

FIRE

There, look; I will put my hands in my pockets. . . . But don't forget me. . . . I am the friend of Man. . . . I shall always be there, in the hearth and in the oven; and I will come sometimes and put out my tongue for you when you are cold or sad. . . . I shall be warm in winter and roast chestnuts for you. . . .

WATER (*approaching the* CHILDREN)

I shall kiss you without hurting you, tenderly, my children. . . .

FIRE

Take care, you'll get wet! . . .

WATER

I am loving and gentle; I am kind to human beings. . . .

FIRE

What about those you drown? . . .

WATER

Love the wells, listen to the brooks. . . . I shall always be there. . . .

FIRE

She has flooded the whole place. . . .

WATER

When you sit down, in the evening, beside the springs—there is more than one here in the forest—try to understand what they are trying to say. . . .

FIRE

Enough! Enough! . . . I can't swim! . . .

WATER

I shall no longer be able to tell you as clearly as I do to-day that I love you; but you will not forget that that is what I am saying to you when you hear my voice. . . . Alas! . . . I can

say no more. . . . My tears choke me and prevent my speaking. . . .

FIRE

It doesn't sound like it! . . .

WATER

Think of me when you see the water-bottle. . . . Alas! I have to be silent there; but my thoughts will always be of you. . . . You will find me also in the ewer, the watering-can, the cistern and the tap. . . .

MILK (*approaching timidly*)

And me in the milk-jug. . . .

TYLTYL

What, you too, my dear Milk, so shy and so good? . . . Is everybody going? . . .

SUGAR (*naturally mawkish and sanctimonious*)

If you have a little corner left in your memory, remember sometimes that my presence was sweet to you. . . . That is all I have to say. . . . Tears are not in harmony with my tempera-

ment and they hurt me terribly when they fall on my feet. . . .

BREAD

Jesuit! . . .

FIRE (*yelping*)

Sugar-plum! Lollipop! Caramel! . . .

TYLTYL

But where are Tylette and Tylô gone to? . . . What are they doing? . . .

(*The* CAT *is heard to utter shrill cries.*)

MYTYL (*alarmed*)

It's Tylette crying! . . . He is being hurt! . . .

(*Enter the* CAT, *running, his hair on end and dishevelled, his clothes torn, holding his handkerchief to his cheek, as though he had the toothache. He utters angry groans and is closely pursued by the* DOG, *who overwhelms him with bites, blows and kicks.*)

THE DOG (*beating the* CAT)

There! . . . Have you had enough? . . .

Do you want any more? . . . There! There! There! . . .

LIGHT, TYLTYL *and* MYTYL (*rushing forward to part them*)

Tylô! . . . Are you mad? . . . Well, I never! . . . Down! . . . Stop that, will you? . . . How dare you? . . . Wait, wait! . . .

(*They part the* DOG *and the* CAT *by main force.*)

LIGHT

What is it? . . . What has happened? . . .

THE CAT (*blubbering and wiping his eyes*)

It's the Dog, Mrs. Light. . . . He insulted me, he put tin tacks in my food, he pulled my tail, he beat me; and I had done nothing, nothing, nothing at all! . . .

THE DOG (*mimicking him*)

Nothing, nothing, nothing at all! . . . (*In an undertone, with a mocking grimace*) Never mind, you've had some, you've had some and you're going to have some more! . . .

MYTYL (*pressing the* CAT *in her arms*)
My poor Tylette, where has he hurt you? . . . Tell me. . . . I shall cry too. . . .

LIGHT (*to the* DOG, *severely*)
Your conduct is all the more unworthy since you have chosen for this disgraceful exhibition the already most painful moment when we are about to part from these poor children. . . .

THE DOG (*suddenly sobered*)
To part from these poor children? . . .

LIGHT
Yes; the hour which you know of is at hand. . . . We are going to return to silence. . . . We shall no longer be able to speak to them. . . .

THE DOG (*suddenly uttering real howls of despair and flinging himself upon the* CHILDREN, *whom he loads with violent and tumultuous caresses*).
No! No! . . . I refuse! . . . I refuse! . . . I shall always talk! . . . You will understand me now, will you not, my little god? . . . Yes! Yes! Yes!

. . . And we shall tell each other everything, everything, everything! . . . And I shall be very good. . . . And I shall learn to read and write and play dominoes! . . . And I shall always be very clean. . . . And I shall never steal anything in the kitchen again. . . . Shall I do a wonderful trick for you? . . . Would you like me to kiss the Cat? . . .

MYTYL (*to the* CAT)

And you, Tylette? . . . Have you nothing to say to us? . . .

THE CAT (*in an affected and enigmatic tone*)

I love you both as much as you deserve. . . .

LIGHT

Now let me, in my turn, children, give you a last kiss. . . .

TYLTYL *and* MYTYL (*hanging on to* LIGHT'S *dress*)

No, no, no, Light! . . . Stay here with us! . . . Daddy won't mind. . . . We will tell mummy how kind you have been. . . .

LIGHT

Alas! I cannot! . . . This door is closed to us and I must leave you. . . .

TYLTYL

Where will you go all alone? . . .

LIGHT

Not very far, my children; over there, to the Land of the Silence of Things. . . .

TYLTYL

No, no; I won't have you go. . . . We will go with you. . . . I shall tell mummy. . . .

LIGHT

Do not cry, my dear little ones. . . . I have not a voice like Water; I have only my brightness, which Man does not understand. . . . But I watch over him to the end of his days. . . . Never forget that I am speaking to you in every spreading moonbeam, in every twinkling star, in every dawn that rises, in every lamp that is lit, in every good and bright thought of your soul. . . . (*Eight o'clock*

strikes behind the wall.) Listen! . . . The hour is striking! . . . Good-bye! . . . The door is opening! . . . In with you, in with you! . . .

(*She pushes the* CHILDREN *through the door, which has half-opened and which closes again behind them.* BREAD *wipes away a furtive tear,* SUGAR *and* WATER, *etc., all in tears, flee precipitously and disappear in the wings to the right and left. The* DOG *howls behind the scenes. The stage remains empty for a moment and then the scenery representing the wall and the little door opens in the middle and reveals the last scene.*)

SCENE 2.—*The Awakening.*

The same setting as in ACT I, *but the objects, the walls and the atmosphere all*

appear incomparably and magically fresher, happier, more smiling. The daylight penetrates gaily through the chinks of the closed shutters. To the right, at the back, TYLTYL *and* MYTYL *lie sound asleep in their little beds. The* DOG, *the* CAT *and the* THINGS *are in the places which they occupied in* ACT I, *before the arrival of the* FAIRY.

Enter MUMMY TYL

MUMMY TYL (*in a cheerfully scolding voice*)

Up, come, get up, you little lazybones! . . . Aren't you ashamed of yourselves? . . . It has struck eight and the sun is high above the trees! . . . Lord, how they sleep, how they sleep! . . . (*She leans over and kisses the* CHILDREN.) They are quite rosy. . . . Tyltyl smells of lavender and Mytyl of lilies-of-the-valley. . . . (*Kissing them again*)

What sweet things children are! . . . Still, they can't go on sleeping till midday. . . . I mustn't let them grow up idle. . . . And, besides, I have heard that it's not very healthy. . . . (*Gently shaking* TYLTYL) Wake up, wake up, Tyltyl. . . .

TYLTYL (*waking up*)

What? . . . Light? . . . Where is she? . . . No, no, don't go away. . . .

MUMMY TYL

Light? . . . Why, of course it's light . . . Has been for ever so long. . . . It's as bright as noonday, though the shutters are closed. . . . Wait a bit till I open them. . . . (*She pushes back the shutters and the dazzling daylight invades the room.*) There! See! . . . What's the matter with you? . . . You look quite blinded. . . .

TYLTYL (*rubbing his eyes*)

Mummy, mummy! . . . It's you! . . .

MUMMY TYL

Why, of course, it's I. . . . Who did you think it was? . . .

TYLTYL

It's you. . . . Yes, yes, it's you! . . .

MUMMY TYL

Yes, yes, it's I. . . . I haven't changed my face since last night. . . . Why do you stare at me in that wonderstruck way? . . . Is my nose turned upside down, by any chance? . . .

TYLTYL

Oh, how nice it is to see you again! . . . It's so long, so long ago! . . . I must kiss you at once. . . . Again! Again! Again! . . . And how comfortable my bed is! . . . I am back at home! . . .

MUMMY TYL

What's the matter? . . . Why don't you wake up? . . . Don't tell me you're ill. . . . Let me see, show me your tongue. . . . Come, get up and dress. . . .

TYLTYL

Hullo, I've got my shirt on! . . .

MUMMY TYL

Of course you have. . . . Put on your

breeches and your little jacket. . . .
There they are, on the chair. . . .

TYLTYL

Is that what I did on the journey? . . .

MUMMY TYL

What journey? . . .

TYLTYL

Why, last year. . . .

MUMMY TYL

Last year? . . .

TYLTYL

Why, yes! . . . At Christmas, when I went away. . . .

MUMMY TYL

When you went away? . . . You haven't left the room. . . . I put you to bed last night, and here you are this morning. . . . Have you dreamed all that? . . .

TYLTYL

But you don't understand! . . . It was last year, when I went away with Mytyl, the Fairy, Light—how nice Light is! —Bread, Sugar, Water, Fire: they did nothing but quarrel! . . . You're

not angry with me? . . . Did you feel very sad? . . . And what did daddy say? . . . I could not refuse . . . I left a note to explain. . . .

MUMMY TYL

What are you talking about? . . . For sure, either you're ill or else you're still asleep. . . . (*She gives him a friendly shake.*) There, wake up. . . . There, is that better? . . .

TYLTYL

But, mummy, I assure you. . . . It's you that's still asleep. . . .

MUMMY TYL

What! Still asleep, am I? . . . Why, I've been up since six o'clock. . . . I've finished all the cleaning and lit the fire. . . .

TYLTYL

But ask Mytyl if it's not true. . . . Oh, we have had such adventures! . . .

MUMMY TYL

Why Mytyl? . . . What do you mean? . . .

TYLTYL

She was with me. . . . We saw grandad and granny. . . .

MUMMY TYL (*more and more bewildered*)

Grandad and granny? . . .

TYLTYL

Yes, in the Land of Memory. . . . It was on our way. . . . They are dead, but they are quite well. . . . Granny made us a lovely plum-tart. . . . And then the little brothers—Robert, Jean and his top—and Madeleine and Pierrette and Pauline and Riquette, too. . . .

MYTYL

Riquette still goes about on all fours! . . .

TYLTYL

And Pauline still has a pimple on her nose. . . .

MUMMY TYL

Have you found the key of the cupboard where daddy hides his brandy bottle? . . .

TYLTYL

Does daddy hide a brandy bottle? . . .

MUMMY TYL

Certainly. One has to hide everything when one has little meddlesome good-for-nothings like you. . . . But come, out with it, confess that you took it. . . . I would rather it was that. . . . I sha'n't tell daddy. . . . I sha'n't beat you. . . .

TYLTYL

But, mummy, I don't know where it is. . . .

MUMMY TYL

Just walk in front of me, so that I may see if you can walk straight. . . . (TYLTYL *does so*) No, it's not that. . . . Dear heaven, what is the matter with them? . . . I shall lose them too, as I lost the others! . . . (*Suddenly mad with alarm, she calls out*) Daddy Tyl! . . . Come, quick! The children are ill! . . .

(*Enter* DADDY TYL, *very calmly, with an axe in his hand.*)

DADDY TYL

What is it? . . .

TYLTYL *and* MYTYL (*running up gaily to kiss their father*)

Hullo, daddy! . . . It's daddy! . . . Good-morning, daddy! . . . Have you had plenty of work this year? . . .

DADDY TYL

Well, what's the matter? . . . They don't look ill; they look very well. . . .

MUMMY TYL (*weeping*)

You can't trust their looks. . . . It will be as with the others. . . . They looked quite well also to the end; and then God took them. . . . I don't know what's the matter with them. . . . I put them to bed quite quietly last night; and this morning, when they woke up, everything was wrong. . . . They don't know what they're saying; they talk about a journey. . . . They have seen Light and grandad and granny, who are dead, but who are quite well. . . .

TYLTYL

But grandad still has his wooden leg. . . .

MYTYL

And granny her rheumatics. . . .

MUMMY TYL

Do you hear? . . . Run and fetch the doctor! . . .

DADDY TYL

Why, no, no. . . . They are not dead yet. . . . Come, let us look into this. . . . (*A knock at the front door.*) Come in! . . .

(*Enter* NEIGHBOUR BERLINGOT, *a little old woman resembling the* FAIRY *in* ACT I *and leaning on a stick.*)

THE NEIGHBOUR

Good-morning and a Merry Christmas to you all! . . .

TYLTYL

It's the Fairy Bérylune! . . .

THE NEIGHBOUR

I have come to ask for a bit of fire for my Christmas stew. . . . It's very chilly

this morning. . . . Good-morning, children, how are you? . . .

TYLTYL

Fairy Bérylune, I could not find the Blue Bird. . . .

THE NEIGHBOUR

What is he saying? . . .

MUMMY TYL

Don't ask me, Madame Berlingot. . . . They don't know what they are saying. . . . They have been like that since they woke up. . . . They must have eaten something that wasn't good. . . .

THE NEIGHBOUR

Why, Tyltyl, don't you remember Goody Berlingot, your Neighbour Berlingot? . . .

TYLTYL

Why, yes, ma'am. . . . You are the Fairy Bérylune. . . . You're not angry with us? . . .

THE NEIGHBOUR

Béry . . . what? Goodness gracious me! . . .

TYLTYL

Bérylune.

THE NEIGHBOUR

Berlingot, you mean Berlingot. . . .

TYLTYL

Bérylune or Berlingot, as you please, ma'am. . . . But Mytyl knows. . . .

MUMMY TYL

That's the worst of it, that Mytyl also. . . .

DADDY TYL

Pooh, pooh! . . . That will soon go; I will give them a smack or two. . . .

THE NEIGHBOUR

Don't; it's not worth while. . . . I know all about it; it's only a little fit of dreaming. . . . They must have slept in the moonbeams. . . . My little girl, who is very ill, is often like that. . . .

MUMMY TYL

By the way, how is your little girl? . . .

THE NEIGHBOUR

Only so-so. . . . She can't get up. . . . The doctor says that it's her nerves. . . . I know what would cure her, for all that. She was asking me for it

only this morning, for her Christmas box; it's a notion she has . . .

MUMMY TYL

Yes, I know; it's Tyltyl's bird. . . . Well, Tyltyl, aren't you going to give it at last to that poor little thing? . . .

TYLTYL

What, mummy? . . .

MUMMY TYL

Your bird. . . . It's no use to you. . . . You don't even look at it now. . . . And she has been dying to have it for ever so long! . . .

TYLTYL

Hullo, that's true, my bird! . . . Where is he? . . . Oh, there's the cage! . . . Mytyl, do you see the cage? . . . It's the one which Bread carried. . . . Yes, yes, it's the same one, but there's only one bird in it. . . . Has he eaten the other, I wonder? . . . Hullo, why, he's blue! . . . But it's my turtle-dove! . . . But he's much bluer than when I went away! . . . Why, that's the blue bird we were look-

ing for! . . . We went so far and he was here all the time! . . . Oh, but it's wonderful! . . . Mytyl, do you see the bird? What would Light say? . . . I will take down the cage. . . . (*He climbs on a chair and takes down the cage and carries it to the* NEIGHBOUR.) There, Madame Berlingot, there you are. . . . He's not quite blue yet, but that will come, you shall see! . . . Take him off quick to your little girl. . . .

THE NEIGHBOUR

Really? . . . Do you mean it? . . . Do you give it me like that, straight away and for nothing? . . . Lord, how happy she will be! . . . (*Kissing* TYLTYL) I must give you a kiss! . . . I fly! . . . I fly! . . .

TYLTYL

Yes, yes; be quick. . . . Some of them change their colour. . . .

THE NEIGHBOUR

I will come back to tell you what she says. . . .

(*She goes out.*)

TYLTYL (*after taking a long look around him*)

Daddy, mummy, what have you done to the house? . . . It's just as it was, but it's much prettier. . . .

DADDY TYL

How do you mean, it's prettier? . . .

TYLTYL

Why, yes, everything has been painted and made to look new, everything is clean and polished. . . . It was not like that last year. . . .

DADDY TYL

Last year? . . .

TYLTYL (*going to the window*)

And look at the forest! . . . How big and fine it is! . . . One would think it was new! . . . How happy I feel here! . . . . (*Going to the bread-pan and opening it*) Where's Bread? . . . I say, the loaves are very quiet. . . . And then here's Tylô! . . . Hullo, Tylô, Tylô! . . . Ah, you had a

fine fight! . . . Do you remember, in the forest? . . .

MYTYL

And Tylette. . . . He knows me, but he has stopped talking. . . .

TYLTYL

Mr. Bread. . . . (*Feeling his forehead*) Hullo, the diamond's gone! . . . Who's taken my little green hat? . . . Never mind; I don't want it any more. . . . Ah, Fire! . . . He's a good one! . . . He crackles and laughs to make Water angry. . . . (*Running to the tap*) And Water? . . . Good-morning, Water! . . . What does she say? . . . She still talks, but I don't understand her as well as I did. . . .

MYTYL

I don't see Sugar. . . .

TYLTYL

Lord, how happy I am, happy, happy, happy! . . .

MYTYL

So am I, so am I! . . .

MUMMY TYL

What are you spinning round for like that? . . . .

DADDY TYL

Don't mind them and don't distress yourself. . . . They are playing at being happy. . . .

TYLTYL

I liked Light best of all. . . . Where's her lamp? . . . Can we light it? . . . (*Looking round him again.*) Goodness me, how lovely it all is and how glad I feel! . . .

MUMMY TYL

Why? . . .

TYLTYL

I don't know, mummy. . . .

(*A knock at the front-door.*)

DADDY TYL

Come in, come in! . . .

(*Enter the* NEIGHBOUR, *holding by the hand a little girl of a fair and wonderful beauty, who carries* TYLTYL'S *dove pressed in her arms.*)

THE NEIGHBOUR

Do you see the miracle? . . .

MUMMY TYL

Impossible! . . . Can she walk? . . .

THE NEIGHBOUR

Can she walk? . . . She can run, she can dance, she can fly! . . . When she saw the bird, she jumped, just like that, with one bound, to the window, to see by the light if it was really Tyltyl's dove. . . . And then, whoosh! . . . Out into the street, like an angel! . . . It was as much as I could do to keep pace with her. . . .

TYLTYL (*going up to her, wonderstruck*)

Oh, how like Light she is! . . .

MYTYL

She is much smaller. . . .

TYLTYL

Yes, indeed! . . . But she will grow bigger. . . .

THE NEIGHBOUR

What are they saying? . . . Haven't they got over it yet? . . .

MUMMY TYL

They are better, they are mending. . . . It will be all right when they have had their breakfasts. . . .

THE NEIGHBOUR (*pushing the* LITTLE GIRL *into* TYLTYL'S *arms*).

Come along, child, come and thank Tyltyl. . . .

(TYLTYL, *suddenly frightened, takes a step back.*)

MUMMY TYL

Well, Tyltyl, what's the matter? . . . Are you afraid of the little girl? . . . Come, give her a kiss, a good big kiss. . . . No, a better one than that. . . . You're not so shy as a rule! . . . Another one! . . . But what's the matter with you? . . . You look as if you were going to cry. . . .

(TYLTYL, *after kissing the* LITTLE GIRL *rather awkwardly, stands before her for a moment and the two children look at each other without speaking; then*

TYLTYL *strokes the dove's head.*)

TYLTYL

Is he blue enough? . . .

THE LITTLE GIRL

Yes, I am so pleased with him. . . .

TYLTYL

I have seen bluer ones. . . . But those which are quite blue, you know, do what you will, you can't catch them. . . .

THE LITTLE GIRL

That doesn't matter; he's lovely. . . .

TYLTYL

Has he had anything to eat? . . .

THE LITTLE GIRL

Not yet. . . . What does he eat? . . .

TYLTYL

Anything: corn, bread, Indian corn, grasshoppers. . . .

THE LITTLE GIRL

How does he eat, say? . . .

TYLTYL

With his beak. You'll see, I will show you. . . .

(*He moves in order to take the bird from the* LITTLE GIRL'S *hands. She resists instinctively; and, taking advantage of the hesitation of their movements, the* DOVE *escapes and flies away.*)

THE LITTLE GIRL (*with a cry of despair*) Mother! . . . He is gone! . . . (*She bursts into sobs.*)

TYLTYL

Never mind. . . . Don't cry. . . . I will catch him again. . . . (*Stepping to the front of the stage and addressing the audience.*) If any of you should find him, would you be so very kind as to give him back to us? . . . We need him for our happiness, later on. . . .

CURTAIN